

The Power of
Congregational Churches
Asserted and Vindicated,

In Answer to a

T R E A T I S E

O F

Mr. J. P A G E T,
INTITULED

*The Defence of Church-Government
exercised in Classes and Synods.*

By **JOHN DAVENPORT, B. of D.**
and Pastor to the Church in *Newhaven*
in *New-England.*

Isa. 1. 26.

*I will restore thy Judges, as at the first, and
thy Counsellors, as at the beginning: after-
wards thou shalt be called, The City of Right-
eousness, the faithful City.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for Rich. Chiswell, and to be sold by
John Usher of Boston in New-England,

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The Power
of Congregational Churches
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A

Treatise

by

Mr. John Paget.

intituled, The Defence of Church
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By John Davenport, B. D.

Pastor to the Church in New Haven in New England.

1726.

London,

Printed in the year 1722.







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TO THE

E A D E R.

THe disposals of GOD in his Providence with reference to the travels of Truth, and bringing forth of Light, are much to be observed, and have much to be read in them. There has been a great and over-ruling hand shed, and that very conspicuously, about this present Treatise. The Reverend and learned and eminently accomplish'd Author, first finish'd a Tractate with this Title, and on this Subject, near thirty years ago: But God's time was not yet come for its publishing: it perished therefore in the rude Waves of the vast Ocean, with some other excellent Manuscripts and precious Christians.

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Never

To the Reader

Nevertheless, some seven years after, God set him about it again, and then befinished what is now (after twenty years more) thus made publick. Thus comes this short and nervous Treatise to have had a double, and so a more thorow digestion in the heart of so judicious and holy a Servant of Christ. Nor are the principles and grounds here proceeded on such as our Author suddenly or lately took up. He was of too serious, weighty, and advised a spirit, lightly to take up, or suddenly to vent any singular apprehensions in the things of God. It would be too long to relate, (though I could from his own hand) how he was first staggered in his conformity, and afterwards fully taken off by set Conferences and Debates, with himself and sundry other Ministers obtained with Mr. John Cotton then driven from Boston on account of Nonconformity. Nor am I willing to revive the Memory of what Afflictions our Author afterwards underwent, because he could not be satisfied in Conscience in the two Points; viz. a particular Churches being subjected to a Classis, & Baptizing in that latitude which was then practised, and in still in that Church, to which he had an earnest Call, and with which the Lord gave him a very general and great acceptance. But

certain

To the Reader.

certain it is, the Principles beld forth in this Treatise, cost the Reverend Author, not only many sufferings, but also many, very many sad searchings, and much reading, and study on set purpose, accompanied with manifold prayers and cryes to the Father of Lights for light therein. After all which he was more and more confirmed in them, and attained to such comfortable clearness therein, as bore him up with much inward peace and satisfaction under all his afflictions on the account of his perswasion in these Points. And so perswaded, lived, and so died this grave and serious spirited man. The Reader will find in it (which is a rare conjunction) much succinctness, with much Scripture clearness. Light contracted, like the Sun-beams in a Burning-glass, is the stronger, and would be the more grateful too, if it could possibly meet with an Eye able to receive it. There are that think, and as they conceive from Scripture grounds too, that the glory of the Saints in Heaven receives additions, and increases daily, as their holy walk, and faithful service when here on Earth, doth after they are gone, bring forth Fruit to the praise of God amongst those that are left behind them. If so, they that ever had any value and affection for this Eminent Servant of Christ,

(and

To the Reader.

(and there were, yea yet are many in whose hearts a precious remembrance of him lives, and will live for ever) are engaged to read and improve this Excellent Work of his for their instruction, and establishment in the Truths of Christ. It was for several Moneths since sent over from New-England, with desire that it might be Printed. The wise and all-disposing Providence of God allotted this as the season for it, and in his season all things have a peculiar beauty; and it may be presumed that the hearts of God's people are more generally prepared for a ready entertainment of light held out to them, and that the Lord will please to fulfil that good word of Promise upon all his faithful and humbled people, Ezek. 43. 11. [And if they be ashamed of all they have done, &c.]

There are two things run through this whole discourse, and are ligible even in every line of it.

1. That the power of Churches is confined to their Res Propria, their own proper matters.

2. That there is not any Spiritual Church-power, to which they are by any Institution of Christ subjected. Two grand and Pillar-Principles of the Congregational-way, both of them abundantly cleared from

To the Reader.

from mistakes, and established upon Scripture-foundations.

Now the blessing of Heaven go with it, to lead the Reader into the truth of Christ in these Points, and to take off from the minds of such of our Rulers, into whose hands this Book may fall, all those prejudices against the Congregational-way, which it may have been unjustly misrepresented under. For as in all the main matters of Faith and Doctrine we differ not from the established publick Profession of the Kingdom, yea are much more tenacious thereof than many of our zealous adversaries, so in those things, which seem to be our most singular Opinions (and wherein we differ most from the publick Profession, and for which we have suffered, and are ready by the grace of Christ still to suffer even worse matters, if the will of God be so concerning us) this Book, after many others, which speak the same Language, may render it plain and evident to impartial and understanding Readers, the Principles and practices of the Congregational-way, are not in truth so incompatible with the power of the Supream Magistrate in matters of Religion, as some would represent, nor such as may render them suspected to Civil powers

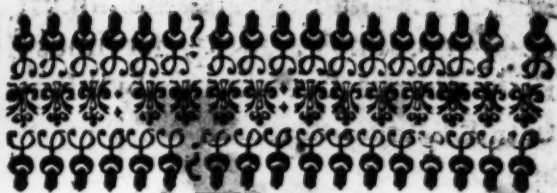
To th Reader.

powers, and that therefore we may not for
these our Principles be accounted unworthy
to enjoy a peaceable dwelling in our native
Land, the weal whereof is more dear to us
than our lives, or all our private earthly
enjoyments in it.

May 23;
1672.

M. N.

Ter-



*Tertull. de præscr. adv.
Hæret. Cap. 21.*

CONSTAT omnem Doctrinam, quæ
cum Ecclesiis Apostolicis matri-
cibus & originalibus fidei conspiret,
veritati deputandam, id sine dubio
tenentem quod Ecclesia ab Aposto-
lis, Apostoli à Christo, Christus à
Deo suscepit: reliquam verò om-
nem Doctrinam de mendacio præ-
judicandam, quæ sapiat contra ve-
ritatem Ecclesiarum, & Apostolo-
rum, & Christi, & Dei.

Aug. de venit. Eccl. Cap. 3. Tom. 7.

Sunt certè libri Dominici, quo-
rum

rum Authoritati utriq; consentimus,
utriq; credimus, utriq; servimus;
ibi quæramus Ecclesiam, ibi discu-
tiamus causam nostram.

*Hieron. Epist. ad Minerium &
Alexandrum.*

Omnia probate, quod bonum est
teneat—estote probati nummularij,
ut si quis nummus adulter est, & figu-
ram Cæsaris non habet, nec signatus
est moneta publica, reprobetur, qui
autem Christi faciem claro præfert
lumine, in cordis nostri marsupium
recondatur.

The



The Churches Charter.

Containing Two Parts,

1. *The Constitution of particular visible Churches.*
2. *The Priviledges and Power given to such Churches.*

BEfore I proceed to examine Mr. Pagets arguing for the Ecclesiastical Juridical Power of Classes, I shall positively declare what power is given by Christ to particular Churches, after I have described their constitution according to Christ his appointment. In every of which particulars I shall principally insist in the metaphor of a *Corporation* or body politick, such as that of the chiefest and most perfect Cities is; because I find, that it pleaseth the Holy Ghost in Scripture, frequently to express this matter under this similitude. * But I shall not venture to apply it any further than the light of Truth in Scripture will

B

direct

*Pr. 48. 13
2. & 89. 31
Isa. 26. 12
Eccl. 40. 14
Rev. 1. 11
12. 17
Luc. 1. 14

*Mat. 3.17

& 17.5.

† Acts 3.

22, 23.

Cypr. ad
Cœcil. lib.

2. ep. 3.

Si solus

Christus

audiendus

est, non de-

bemus at-

tendere

quid ali-

quis ante

nos faci-

endum

putaverit,

sed quid,

qui ante

omnis est,

Christus

prior fece-

rit, & fa-

ciendum

statuerit.

Neque e-

nim homi-

nis con-

suetudi-

nem sequi

oportet,

sed Dei

veritatem,

cum per

Isaiam

Propheta

tam Deus

loquatur

& dicat,

Ecce

(2)

direct and warrant : There we finde the grand Charter it self, and the ancient Presidents of the first Christian Churches planted by the Apostles. According to these Records I shall endeavour to declare the mind of Christ, whom God the Father commands us to hear, * in all things whatsoever he saith unto us, and that under a dreadful penalty, † Whence Cyprian doth wel infer, *If only Christ is to be heard, we ought not to attend what any before us thought should be done, but what Christ, who is before all, hath done, and appointed to be done.* For we ought not to follow the custom of men, but the truth of God, seeing the Lord saith by the Prophet Isaiah, *In vain they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* The Charter, according to which particular Churches are to be constituted, and their power, *in re propria*, is to be stated; we find in Mat. 16. 18, 19. In the opening and explaining whereof, I purpose, with Christ's assistance, to proceed in this method; 1st, handling the constitution of a particular visible Church; 2ly, clearing the power of it.

The words in Mat. 16. 18, hold forth a perfect Rule for the constituting of a visible Church, of its causes, of which we shall speak severally, and distinctly, and the

the more largely, that the strength of such objections as occur, in each particular, may be duly weighed; and in handling them, I shall observe this order.

1. I shall propound, what I conceive to be the truth, in certain doctrinal Conclusions.
 2. Explicate and confirm them.
 3. Deduce thence such Confectaries or Inferences as freely flow from them.
-

CHAP. I.

1. **T**He principal efficient cause is noted in this clause, *I will build my Church.*] I? who is that? even he, whom Peter had confessed in these words, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* That is, Jesus our Mediator. 1. He speaks in the first Person, not in the second: For though he useth men as his instruments, yet himself, by his Spirit, buildeth his Church, *Zach. 4. 6.* Therefore it is called, *his Building*, *1 Cor. 3. 9.* 2. He speaks not in the preter, or present tense, but in the future [*I will build.*] For though Christ was yesterday, is to day, and shall be ever, the builder of his Church; yet he thus speaketh in a particular respect to the Christian Churches under the New-
B 2 Testament,

Testament, which should be *built* (after his Ascension) of *Jews* and *Gentiles* joyned into one body , *upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the Corner-Stone , &c.* Ephes. 2. 20, 21, 22. The Conclusion hence is,

1. *Concl.*

That Jesus Christ our Mediatour is the only immediate Authour and Institutor of particular visible Churches.] That he speaketh here of a particular visible Church, and not of the Catholick Church, appeareth, by his giving to it the Keyes ; Which, we shall prove hereafter, are given only to particular Churches. 2. That Christ himself is the only immediate Institutor of such Churches , may be evinced ; 1. Generally, from *Heb.* 3. 3, 4, 5. 2. Particularly, by Induction, thus ; 1. He is *the Door*, by *whom* they that are orderly admitted , must *enter*, *Joh.* 10. 9. 2. He *sets the Members, every one of them*, in that place and rank which they have *in the Body*, *1 Cor.* 12. 18. and gifteth them accordingly, *Ephes.* 4. 7. 3. He *compacteth* the whole Body, *Ephes.* 4. 16. and firmly knits the materials together in this Spiritual building , *1 Pet.* 2. 5. 4. He gives the several Offices and Officers, Pastors, Teachers, Ruling-Elders, and Deacons, *1 Cor.* 12. 28. *Ephes.* 4. 8, 11. 5. He appointeth

(5)

pointeth the visible Seals; *Baptism*, Col. 2. 10, 11, 12. and *the Lords Supper*, 1 Cor. 11, 23, &c. 6. He is the Law-giver to his Church, *Jam.* 4. 12. 7. He is the Lord of all Church-Admininistrations, 1 Cor. 12. 3. 8. The Censures have their power and efficacy from him, *Rev.* 3. 7. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 9. The blessing of all the Ordinances is from his Institution of them, and effectual presence with his Church and Ministers dispensing them, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20.

Thus he is by a three-fold right. 1. From *Reas.* the Decree and Donation of the Father, *Psal.* 2. 7, 8. *John* 3. 35. and 5. 22, 23. 2. From the Redemption of his Church, *Act.* 20. 28. *Phil.* 2. 9, 10, 11. *Matth.* 28. 18, 19, 20. 3. From his conquest over the powers of darkness, from whence he hath delivered them, and translated them into his Kingdom, *Col.* 1. 13.

In all these respects, and many more, Jesus Christ, our Mediatour, hath right to institute particular Christian Churches, and to cast them into what mould he pleaseth.

From this Conclusion, thus proved, I infer, as followeth.

1. *Consequ.* Then Jesus Christ is the only Lord, and Head of such Churches as him.

himself hath instituted. Thus from Christ's *building his House*, followeth his *being over the House*; Hebrews 3. 3, 6. And he is over it, as the Lord of it, *Acts* 2. 36. And as the only Political Head of it, in three respects, 1. Of Preheminence, as having the Spirit in a greater measure than all his Members, *Col.* 1. 18. *John* 3. 34. 2. In respect of Government, *Ephes.* 5. 22, 23, 24. 3. In respect of Influence, *Joh.* 15. 5. and that, not only in respect of common Gifts, whereof Hypocrites partake, which, if they be joyned to Christ's visible Body, the Church, are but dead Members, whom, as dead Branches in the Vine, God will take away, and cast forth, *Joh.* 15. 2, 6. but also in respect of quickning Grace, whence they are called, *ἡ δόξα ζωῆς*, 1. *Pet.* 2. 5. Hence they grow *up in all things into him which is the Head, Christ*; and are edifying and edified Members in the Body, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16.

Nor is Christ the Head only of the Catholick Church, but also of every particular Church instituted by him, which is therefore frequently by Christ himself called, *the Kingdom of God, and of Heaven*, the King whereof is Christ; his Subjects are visible Believers, professing their Faith

in him, and their subjection to his Laws, and Ordinances, *2 Cor. 9. 13.* This Sovereign power is so properly Christs, that it is not communicable to any Creature; nor can any man be his Substitute or Vicar herein. For neither doth Christ, or his Church need such a Vicar, or visible Head of the Church, seeing the Church is compleat in Christ alone, *Col. 2. 10.* Nor is any Creature capable of discharging the Office of an Head unto the Church, *Ephes. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23.*

2. *Consecr.* Then it is not in the power of Earthly Kings or States, or Civil Courts, to make Ecclesiastical Laws, or to invent and impose any Rites or Forms of Worship upon Churches, according to Principles of State-Policy, or Humane Prudence. Though *Moses* was, as well a great Prophet, as a great Prince, yet God left no part of the building of the Tabernacle to his prudence, but limited him in all things to the pattern in the Mount, *Exod. 25. 40.* Nor might *Solomon*, though the wisest of meer men, act by his own wisdom in building the Temple, but *1 Chron. 28. 11, 12, 13.* he was guided therein by the perfect pattern, which *David* gave him from the Spirit. So concerning Christian Churches, Christ hath given his People a perfect pat-

term, which he requireth the Ministers to hold forth distinctly in every point of it, to his people; according to that Prophe-
sie in Ezek. 43. 10, 11. *That they may keep the whole Form thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, and do them,* which also Christ expressly requireth in *Matth. 28. 19, 20.*

3. *Conseſt.* Then every particular vi-
ſible Church muſt exalt Chriſt and his In-
ſtitutions alone, in their whole Church-
Order, and in all their Adminiſtrations. This
is their viſible *receiving Chriſt Jeſus the
Lord, and walking in him,* Col. 2. 5, 6.
The Church is Chriſt's Houſe; and it's e-
qual, according to Natural light, and ci-
vil prudence, that every man ſhould bear
Rule in his own Houſe, *Eſth. 1. 22.* Much
more Chriſt, who is God and Man. *Ar-
taxerxes* ſhall riſe up in judgment with all
ſuch as incroach upon Chriſt's Right, in
ordering Churches by their policies, and
condemn them; for he, fearing the jea-
louſy and wrath of God, if men ſhould
take ſuch liberty to themſelves, provided
againſt it, by a ſtrict Decree, ſaying, *What-
ſoever is commanded by the God of Heaven,
let it be diligently done for the Houſe of the
God of Heaven; for why ſhould there be
wrath againſt the Realm?* &c. *Eſth. 7. 23.*

Not is the wrath of Chriſt leſs formi-
dable

able to us, or his jealousie less incensed against those, that, either add to, or take from, or alter his Institutions now, than in times past; but rather more, *Hebr. 12. 25.* to the end.

So much shall serve touching the Efficient Cause and Institutor of particular visible Churches,

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Material Cause.

THE Materials whereof this Spiritual Building must consist, are implied, when Christ saith, *Upon this Rock will I build*, &c. together with *Peters* confession, in *ver. 16.* and Christ's approbation of it, *ver. 17.* which gave occasion to this Speech of Christ, *Upon this Rock*, &c. For the Rock is Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. 3. 11.* But how considered? not simply, and in an abstract sense; but, 1. As Preached by the Ministry of the Gospel, *Ephes. 2. 20.* 2. As believed on with a Faith made visible by publick confession, according to *Rom. 10. 9, 10.* Christ believed on, is the Foundation, or Rock, of the Catholick invisible Church: But Christ believed

on and confessed, is the Rock whereupon a particular visible Church is built. In this Exposition, sundry of the Ancient Writers, (*a*) and the Orthodox Modern, generally consent.

(*a*) *Basil.*
Tract. de
pœnit. Gre.
Naz. de
Comp. dis-
serendi ra-
tione. The-
od. in Psal.

47. *Ambr.*
in *Eph. 2.*
20. *Aug. in*
lib. 1. Re-
tract. c. 21.

The Doctrinal conclusion, which these words of the Charter afford us, concerning the materials of particular visible Churches, is, that,

2. *Conclusion.* It is the will and appointment of Christ, that all and only such grown persons be admitted Members of particular Churches, who make such a publick profession of their Faith, as the Church may, in charitable discretion, conceive, hath blessedness annexed to it, and is such as flesh and blood hath not revealed to a man, but our Heavenly Father.]

1. That Christ here meant a particular visible Church, and not only the Catholick Church, we have partly evinced already, and shall more fully hereafter. 2. That persons meant by Christ here, are *adulti*, grown persons, appeareth by his questions to the Apostles, *Whom do men say?* and, *whom do ye say, that I am?* and, by Peter's answer. As for Infants, they are indeed Members of the Church, and, as such, Baptized; yet it is so, only as they are included in their Parents, by vertue of the Covenant,

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venant, wherein they are wrapped with
 their Parents, *Gen. 17. 7. Aās 2. 38, 39.*
1 Cor. 7. 14. 3. That such *adulti*, or
 grown persons, must make a publick con-
 fession of Faith before the Lord and his
 people.] So Christ required *Peter* to do
 here, and, when he had so done, said
 Christ, *Upon this Rock I will build my*
Church, viz. in after times. For no par-
 ticular Christian Church was actually con-
 stituted, at this time, nor till after the As-
 cension of Christ, in *Aā. 1. q. d.* Then
 take this course, and ever after, all the
 World over, if you will have a particu-
 lar Church to be acknowledged by me to
 be my building. 4. That their Confessi-
 on of Faith must be so made, as that the
 Church may, in charitable discretion con-
 ceive it to have blessedness annexed, &c.
 For seeing it pleaseth Christ to use Men as
 his Instruments in building his Church,
Zach. 6. 15. Ephes. 4. 11, 12. He is content
 that they improve the judgment which
 they have. Christs judgement concern-
 ing *Peter* was infallible; for *he knew what*
was in man, *John 2. 25.* But the Offi-
 cers and Members of the Church are but
 men, who judge by the outward appearance,
1 Sam. 16. 7. Therefore their judgment
 is fallible, and hath been deceived; as we
 see

see in the judgement of the Apostles and the Church at *Jerusalem* concerning *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; and in that of *Philip*, and the Church in *Samaria* concerning *Simon Magus*, &c. Their duty is to proceed as far as men may, by Rule, with due moderation and gentleness, to try them, who offer themselves to fellowship, whether they be Believers, or not; refusing known Hypocrites; though when they have done all they can, close Hypocrites will creep in. 5. That all they who hold forth such a profession of Faith, as the Church may, in charitable discretion, conceive to be true, are to be receiv'd.] Though some of them have been formerly scandalous, yet now holding forth repentance, they are to be received, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* and though some are at present, *weak in Faith*, yet, if we may conceive that the Lord hath received them, the Church must receive them, *Rom. 14. 1, 3.* For Christ approved this confession of *Peter*, though he was at present but weak in Faith, as the following Story in this Chapter, *v. 22, 23.* clearly sheweth. 6. That none but such be admitted into Church-fellowship. For this Chapter limits the Church, to accept only such. *Upon this Rock will I build my Church. i. e.* Christ believed on, and pub-

publickly confessed. A meer verbal confession is not that Rock. For the Devils made such a confession of Christ, yet were not built on him, *Luke 4.34.* But this confession of *Peter* was such as held forth his Faith in him; as appears by Christ's three-fold Elogy, or praise of it. 1. From its effect. *Blessed art thou, &c.* as, *Job. 17.3.* 2. From the procreant cause of it: *Not flesh and blood, but my Father hath revealed it,* as *Mat. 11.25, 26.* 3. From the title *κίψας*, or *Peter*, before promised, *John 1.42.* and now confirmed to him, signifying a *Stone*; whereby Christ, not only acknowledgeth his faith, and that he was thereby a living Stone, and fit to have a principal place in this Spiritual Building, (in which sense, *Peter* applyeth a like title to other Believers, *1 Pet. 2. 4, 5.* who yet were inferiour in degree to himself) but also giveth him this Prerogative and Honour, that he should be the first Planter of the Christian Church, both amongst the *Jews*, *Act. 2.* and the *Gentiles*, *Act. 15.7.*

The Conclusion may be confirmed by two Arguments in the Text.

1.. From the name whereby he calleth this holy Society, *ἐκκλησία* (ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκαλεῖν) a *Church*; i. e. a company called out. Whence? see *Job. 15. 19.* To what? see

See 1 Cor. 1. 2. • How? Not only by *active vocation*, by mans ministry, exhorting them to repent and believe: So sundry are called, who are not, in the least, wrought upon to answer that call, but put it off (as they who were invited to the great Supper, *Luk. 14. 18.*) with excuse. Such are called, but no Church. Therefore more is required to qualifie for membership of a visible Church, *viz. passive vocation*, whereby they are wrought upon to answer Gods call, by submission thereunto, at least, in outward profession, though some do it but *feinedly*, *Pf. 18. 44.* Saints, by internal and invisible calling, are such, as answer Gods call inwardly and spiritually. Saints, by external and visible calling, are subdued to yeeld obedience to the Word in visible profession. Thus, all that were called into the Vineyard, had so much efficacy of the Spirit in them, that they all came into the Vineyard, and laboured in it, though not with like sincerity. *Mat. 20.* According to this clause of the Chapter, the Churches planted by the Apostles, were constituted, for the materials of them; else the Apostles could not have given both the † members and * Churches such high titles, as they did. Nor did they by these titles describe the invisible

† 1 Cor. 1. 2.

Eph. 1. 2.

* 1 Thes. 1. 1

1 Cor. 12. 27

2 Cor. 11. 2

& 6. 16.

1 Tim. 3. 15

invisible Church only, but visible Churches. For to such, *Paul* wrote his Epistles; and the like expressions are applyed, in other texts, manifestly to visible Churches. Nor do these titles describe particular Churches only according to the better sort of members, but such they did, in the judgement of christian charity, conceive all their members to be, as *Paul* told the Philippians, *Phil.* 1. 6, 7. which he could not have said if he had not known the care of the Church, in admitting persons into membership with them, to be according to the conclusion noted by us.

From Christ's appropriating such a *Reas. 2.* particular Church to himself, owning it for his [*my Church*] *q. d.* I own any Church thus built by my self to be my Church; according to that in *Act.* 2. 47. *The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. The Lord added them.* How? Not only by giving them saving faith, and so adding them to the invisible Church, but also by his inclining their hearts to offer themselves unto the fellowship of the visible Church, and to profess their faith before them; and by bowing the hearts of the Apostles and Brethren to receive them into visible communion.

munion of visible Ordinances ; as appear-
eth, *v. 41, 42.* Thus he added them, *daily*
to the Church ; which cleares it to be an
act of the Lords ordinary dispensation,
and therefore presidential to the Churches
in their ordinary practice. They, who
were thus added, are said to be such *as*
should be saved. That is ; they were such,
either in the judgment of the Lord, which
is infallible ; or in the judgment of the
Church, which is fallible. The Church
looked at them, according to their fruits,
viz. their profession of faith, and their
Christian conversation, observing so much
in both, that they saw reason, in charity
guided by rule, to conceive them to be in
a state of Salvation. Such were the three
thousand spoken of in *v. 41.* as appeared
by their affectionate and submissive inqui-
ring of the Apostles, whom *they mocked*
before, what they should *do to be saved,*
being *pricked in their hearts. v. 37.* and af-
terwards, by *their gladly receiving the*
Word ; both of promise, for themselves
and their Children, with faith ; and of
precept, to *repent and be baptized,* and to
save themselves from that froward generati-
on, with obedience. True it is, that they
could not in one day make so large ac-
counts of Gods work upon them, as are
commonly

commonly held forth in our Churches : nor do we effect too large narrations, but with such passages, as are superfluous, left out : And at that time, less was needful to be expressed, than necessity calls for among us, ordinarily. For the Apostles had a more quick Spiritual discerning, than ordinary Officers and Churches have. And concerning the three thousand, *Act. 2.* the manner of their offering themselves to Church-fellowship, visibly at such a time, when such visible confession of Christ was with manifest hazard to their lives, gave good ground to the Apostles and the Brethren, of conceiving charitably, that they were all of them in a state of Salvation, and such as the Lord himself added to the Church. In these places and times, where Church-fellowship is an honour, and drawes after it sundry outward and worldly advantages, it will be necessary, that the Church be satisfied, as by sufficient testimony concerning their good conversation, so by their holding forth their confession of faith, both *que creditur*, and *qui creditur*, of the Doctrine of Faith, and of the Gift of Faith, how it was wrought, and how it works in them. As Mr. Rogers, in his Treatise of Faith, saith it may be known of men by those

G

trials,

tryals. And this care suits the nature of Church-power, which is delegate and stewardly. For, as the faithfulness of a Steward bindeth him to receive none into his Lords family, but according to his Lords mind and appointment; so the faithfulness of the Church unto Christ obligeth them to receive such into this holy fellowship, as they may, in charitable discretion, conceive, the Lord receiveth and addeth thereunto.

Against what hath been said, two objections are made,

Object. 1. *Obj. Christ received Judas, whom he knew to be a hypocrite, into fellowship of the twelve.*

Answer. 1. *Ans. 1.* Not into a particular visible Church; for no such was then gathered. 2. Christ had a peculiar reason for it, w^{ch} doth not concern Churches, *Joh. 13. 18.*

Object. 2. *Obj. 2.* *Christ himself compareth visible Churches, to a Field, wherein are Tares; to a Draw-Net, which gathers good and bad Fishes; to ten Virgins, of which five were foolish; and the Churches planted by the Apostles had in them sundry Hypocrites, and scandalous persons.*

Answer. *Ans.* Such places shew, 1. That in visible Churches sometimes Hypocrites are mixed, either by the sleepiness, and fault of those that should prevent it: Thence

Thence the Tares: or by the wyliness of Hypocrites, who creep in unawares, *Jude 4.* as the bad Fish came into the net under water: or they pretend saving gifts, as the five foolish Virgins; so, false Brethren, *Gal. 2. 4.* 2. The purest Churches may be blemished with scandals, till they can orderly proceed against them; but then they must be cast out. Therefore they knew not that they were such before.

From this 2d conclusion, thus explained and confirmed, we may infer as followeth.

If this be so; then more is required, *Consect. 1* as the essential property of Church-members, as visible, than that they profess before men the Faith, crave fellowship with the visible Church, and desire the visible seals of the Covenant. For men may have all these three properties, who are notoriously scandalous in their lives, Drunkards, Adulterers, prophane Swearers and Cursers; in a word, such as are described, *2 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4.* *Who have a form of Godliness, denying the power of it, concerning whom the Apostle's charge is, from such turn away, v. 5.* If in ordinary converse, the People of God must not exercise needless familiarity with such: much less may they receive them into spiritual fellowship and fraternity.

If such, being Members, must be cast out, certainly, being out of Church-fellowship, they may not be received in, whilst they continue such.

Consect. 2 If Christ will build his Church upon this Rock; then it is the bounden duty of Churches to see, so far as they can according to rule, that all whom they receive into Church-fellowship, be visible Believers, such as have been described in the Conclusion above propounded, explained, and proved; lest otherwise they build without a foundation. Particularly;

1. They are to see, so far as in charity they may discern, that they are Believers in Christ; Else, they cannot answer the titles given them in Scripture, 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. nor the praises given unto Peter so confessing Christ, that Christ said, *Upon this Rock I will build my Church.*
2. They are to see, that they profess their Faith and Holiness in a good conversation, Phil. 1. 27. Jam. 3. 12, 13. For they that *profess they know God, but in their works deny him, are abominable,* Tit. 1. 16.
3. And in a publick confession of their faith before the Church, as Peter did here before Christ and the Apostles, &c. Only, because the Church cannot see the heart immediately, as Christ did Peter's, the confession of faith made

to men must hold forth the gift of faith, as well as the doctrine of faith. So Calvin understood those words, *Sandifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready alwayes to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*

1 Pet. 3. 15. Calvin's note upon it, is this; *Hope, here, is, by a Synecdoche, put for faith. What he saith, ought to be diligently weighed. For it signifieth, that God approveth only that confession, which proceeds out of the heart: because unless faith reside within, the tongue will babble in vain. Therefore faith must be rooted in us, that afterward it may bring forth the fruit of confession. And, when all this is done, the Brethren are to consent in receiving them, and herein to shew forth the gentleness of Christ (who will not break a bruised reed, nor quench smoking flax) in giving due encouragement to the weak in faith, if they see cause to conceive, by rightly ordered charity, that the root of the matter is in them. But, if they see just cause to doubt of that, they have warrant to suspend their acceptance, till better satisfaction be given, from the primitive pattern, in Act. 9. 26. However, the Officers must propound it to the Brethren, to declare, whether they are so far satisfied with what they have*

||Ejus, qui
in vobis
est, spei.]
Spes hic,
per synec-
dochen, pro
fide capi-
tur. Expen-
di debet se-
culò quod
dicit. Sig-
nificat n-
eam demum
confessione
probari
Deo, qui
ex corde
emanat;
quia, nisi
intus resi-
deat fides,
frustra gar-
ritur lingua.
Ergo radi-
ces in no-
bis agat, ut
deinde pro-
ferat Con-
fessionis
fructum.
Calv. in-
1 Pet. 3. 15.

heard, that they do consent that such shall be received into their fellowship; as *Peter* put a like question to the Brethren that went with him from *Joppa*, concerning the Baptizing of *Cornelius* and those with him, upon whom the Holy Ghost fell visibly, *Act. 10. 44, 45, 46. &c.*

Confess. 3

3. *Conf.* If upon this Rock [Christ believed on, and publicly confessed, by grown persons] the Church of Christ is to be built; then the Children of the Church, who were Baptized in their infancy, when they come to be of ripe age, must hold forth publicly their personal confession of Faith, that they may be admitted to the Lords Table, and fellowship in Voting and in Elections and Censures, in their own personal right. But, if they be found grossly ignorant, or prophane, or professing a false faith, or denying the true Faith, or contemners of Church-fellowship, and the Ordinances of Christ, or do not, according to this clause of the Charter, publicly profess their faith, and crave Church-fellowship, they may not be owned for Members, by their admission unto the Lord's Table, and unto other priviledges of Church-communion, in their own right, but are to be declared non-members, In *Jacob's* posterity,

sterity, when the Lord brought them to *Canaan*, that standing Ordinance of presenting unto the Lord, before the Priest, their first fruits, every year, with such a solemn confession made by all grown Israelites, as is appointed in *Deut.* 26. 2 to 16. was a visible profession of their Faith and Obedience, suited to the condition of that Church and time, in performance whereof, they *avouched the Lord to be their God, and to walk in his wayes, and keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, and to hearken unto his Voice: and the Lord avouched them to be his peculiar People, &c.* v. 16, 17, 18. And the like, if not greater, care was had of the profession and conversation of the Sons of strangers, the Children of such Profelytes, as were admitted into the Church of Israel, *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. *John Baptist* also required of all, whom he admitted unto his Baptisme, a repenting-confession of their sins, and that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, *Act.* 19. 4. warning them, not to rest in this, that *Abraham* was their Father, *Mat.* 3. 9. Answerably, the Primitive Churches required of all grown persons, 1. Visible Repentance, in case of open scandals, *Act.* 19. 18. 2. to joyn there-

with a publick profession of their Faith in Christ, *Act. 2. 39.* 3. A profession of their subjection to the Gospel of Christ, *2 Cor. 9. 13.* And after the Apostles dayes, the ancient Churches, they had their *Pœnitentes*, such as held forth their Repentance publickly; and their *Catechumeni*, who were of two sorts, 1. Such as had been Pagans, and were instructed by being catechized in the Christian Faith, that they might crave Baptisme when they should be found fit, and then were called *Competentes*: In the interim, they were called *Audientes*, or, *Auditores*. * 2. Such as having been Baptized in their Infancy, when they did *nonnihil adolefcere*, were Catechized, and being found to be Believers, were confirmed by imposition of Hands, and admitted unto the Lords Table, and unto the full fruition of all Church-priviledges. These, *Clemens* calleth *Incipientes* & *Novitios*, and so do others, from *1 Tim. 3. 6.* As the Mystery of Iniquity wrought higher and more effectually to advance Papal usurpation, by the spoils of Churches, this custom, in the right use of it, ceased; and Popery retained only the name of *Confirmation*, but corrupted the thing, and turned it into a Sacrament, limiting the Administration

* *Tertull.*
l. de pœ-
nit. c. 6. &
præscr. ad-
vers. Hæ-
ret. c. 4.
Cypr. l. 3.
ep. 17.

of it to Diocesan Prælates. This corrupt
 custom was continued in *England*, after
 they renounced the Pope. But, as *Luther*
 in *Germany*, sought to introduce the
 right use of it into the Churches there;
 So did *Cranmer*, under that Godly King
Edward the 6th, endeavour in *England*,
 and committed the perusal and censure of
 the Common-Prayer-Book, to that godly,
 learned and moderate Theologue, *Bucer*;
 who examining the Book, found, among
 sundry other things, ' That those which
 ' were to be confirmed, must say the Apo-
 ' stles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten
 ' Commandments, and answer the Questi-
 ' ons of the short Catechism. *Bucer's* cen-
 ' sure upon it is thus: This requires di-
 ' ligent ponderation. If they think it suf-
 ' ficient, that the words of this Confession
 ' be recited, God abhorreth such as con-
 ' fess him in words, and their heart is far
 ' from him. Nor is Catechizing instituted
 ' to this end, that they should answer in
 ' words only, That they believe in God,
 ' and will keep his Commandments. The
 ' Lord saith, Teach them to observe and
 ' do, and not only to speak; and he requi-
 ' reth such Worshipers, as worship him
 ' in spirit and in truth. But, if a true Con-
 ' fession of Faith, and profession of Obedi-
 ence,

Censura
 M. Bucer
 super lib.
 Ordinatio
 Eccles.
 cap. 17.

'ence, such as should be required of *adulti*,
 'grown persons, unto Baptism, be meant ;
 'such a Confession of Faith must be re-
 'quired, as may be judged, not to be born
 'in the mouth, or gotten only by humane
 'teaching, but 'also it must have those
 'signes in the life and manners, that it
 'ought to be received of the Churches,
 'as coming from an heart truly believing
 'the Gospel, and the Doctrine of the holy Spi-
 'rit. For though the Church cannot look
 into the hearts of men, yet they ought to
 judge of trees by their fruits : which
 fruits, afterwards, he declares at large.
 But I hasten to the next point, having
 been the larger in this, because it is a sub-
 ject of no less importance than dispute, in
 reference to the question under so much
 agitation.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the formal Cause.

THe formall cause, or that which
 gives essential being to this Church,
 is here held forth in a Metaphor, taken
 from houses. For, οἰκοδομεῖν, properly
 signifies, to build an house of materials,
 fitly

fitly joynd and compacted together : but Christ doth not here speak of the structure of a material house, but of the constituting of that holy Society, which he calleth *his Church*, under the metaphor of building an house, which every way suits the matter he speaks of. For, as a material house (suppose, of stones) is built by orderly placing and strongly cementing them together, which before were either scattered stones, or a confused and loose heape, but not an house, till they were thus framed and compacted together : so this holy Society, the Church of Christ, ariseth from the coadunion, or knitting together of many Saints into one, by an holy Covenant, whereby they, *as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House*, 1 Pet. 2, 4, 5. And as the natural body of a man is built, by an orderly joyning and firmly knitting the parts together : So is the Church of Christ built by the mutual Covenanting of the Saints, the Members of the Church, which is called the Body of Christ, where the Members of it are thus orderly and firmly knit to the Head, and one to another. Eph. 4. 15, 16. The same holds in Cities and Families, which are thus built also ; and therefore the Apostle speaketh of this matter, under the same metaphor,

matephor, in *Ephes.* 2. 19, 20, 21. The conclusion from hence is, that

3. *Concl.* It is the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, our Lord, that his Churches, under the New Testament, be constituted, in respect of their essential form, by the publick mutual covenanting of the Saints, with the Lord, and one with another.

Though all men seem to grant, that every Church of Christ hath its being from a Covenant (for which cause, they that want an explicate Covenant, do yet plead their implicate Covenant to maintain the truth of their Church-state) yet such disputes are raised against the Church Covenant, that I am compelled to handle this point also the more largely, that the truth concerning it, may be the better cleared and settled. I shall therefore, with the help of Christ, shew, 1. To what end it serveth; 2. what it imports; 3. prove it to be the Ordinance of Christ; 4. draw some consectaries from the Conclusion.

1. The next end of their confederating is, to engage themselves to submit one to another in the Lord, & to cleave to *Christ* and his Rules, and to one another in him, mutually, and to walk together, accordingly, in the use of all means sanctified and appointed by him for attaining the ends of Church-communion.

2. The

2. The Covenant it self imports two things, 1. On the Lords part, it implyeth, (1.) the Lords giving them his Covenant for themselves and their seed, *Gen. 17. 7.* (2.) His giving them hearts to take hold of his Covenant, accordingly, *Isa. 56. 4, 5, 6, 7.* where you see, the Eunuch's and the son of the stranger's taking hold of the Covenant, is fore-told, as that which should be previous to the Lord's *giving them a place in his house, and bringing them into his holy Mountain* (that is, joyning them to his visible Churches under the New Testament) when the Church *shall be called, an house of prayer to all Nations, v. 7.* 2. On the Saints part; their covenanting for themselves, and for their seed, to be the Lord's People, and to walk in his waies, *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12.* and to cleave firmly one to another, *viz. to their Officers and Brethren, Deut. 12. 19. Neh. 10. 29.* with mutual watchfulness one over another, *Lev. 19. 17. Deut. 29. 18.* with *Heb. 12. 15, 16.* and with mutual submission to Christ, and to one another, in him. *2Cor. 9. 13.*

3. Such Covenanting is Christ's Ordinance unto the Churches under the New Testament; this is proved,

From the parity of reason between the Churches 1. *Reas.*

Churches before the coming of Christ and since, in all essentials of a Church. For in the essential state and form of a Church, there is *par ratio omnium Ecclesiarum*. Before the coming of Christ, the People of God were joined together into Church-fellowship by confederation; *Psal. 50. 5. Gather my Saints together unto me; those that have made a Covenant with me by sacrifice.* So did *Adam*, and all the holy Patriarchs, unto *Abraham*: and so did the posterity of *Jacob*, at Mount *Sinai*, *Exod. 19. 5, 6. and 24. 8.* and from thence were called, *the Church in the Wilderness*, with which *Moses* was joyned. *Act. 7. 38.* And so, the Lord there tells them, it should be in point of the Covenant, though not of Sacrifices, with the Church under the New Testament, *v. 14, 15, 16.* In *Abrahams* family, God built his Church by a Covenant, without sacrifice; but first, the Lord changed his name, and called him *Abraham*, to shew, that he now treated with him, not as a single person, but as a Father of many nations, and as a multitude virtually, *Gen. 17. 5.* Then he gave him his Covenant, to be a God to him, and his seed, *Gen. 17. 7.* and, to shew that it was a Church-Covenant, he gave him Circumcision for the visible signe and seal of

of it. *Gen.* 17. 10---15. Thus far went the Covenant on God's part. 2. On *Abraham's* part; he first accepted both the Covenant and the confirmation of it, with Faith and holy reverence, declared by his rejoicing, *John.* 8. 56. and humble prostration of himself before the Lord, *v.* 17. and by real performance of it, after, both in his own person, being circumcised when he was ninty nine years old, *v.* 24. and, as a Prophet and Ruler, instructing his family, concerning the Covenant and Circumcision, and their duty to accept the one, and submit to the other, which they did accordingly, *v.* 23, 27. and thereby professed their subjection to the Lord and to his Ordinances. Hence the posterity of *Abraham*, by *Isaac* and *Jacob*, became the Lord's People, *Exod.* 3. 7. yea his first born, *Exod.* 4. 22, 23. and had Circumcision as a seal of this Covenant, whereby they were distinguished from all other People, *Dent.* 7. 6, 7, 8. But they, like men, transgressed and broke the Covenant, both in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness: yet the Lord, being faithful in his Covenant unto their forefathers, did not cast them off, but called them to repentance, and renewed his Covenant, in a more Evangelical manner, in the plains of *Moab*, that he might establish

establish them to be his People, and their little ones, and the strangers, *Deut. 29. 10--14.* which Covenant they took hold of, for themselves and their seed, and for them that were not there with them, that day, *v. 15.* that they would admit none unto Church-fellowship with them, but such as should separate themselves from the polutions of the Heathen, and enter into the common engagement with them, to cleave to the Lord, and to one another, with member-like love, watchfulness and submission mutually. Hence it was, that the sin of one *Achan*, became the sin and punishment of all Israel, *Josh. 7. 11, 12.*

2. *Reas.*

From the Apostles manner of planting Christian Churches, after the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ. Their custom it was, when they had converted many to Christ, to joyn them together into one Congregation, by covenanting with the Lord and his People, for themselves and their Children.

Object.

Against this assertion, some object, that in the planting of the Church at Samaria, in Cornelius his house, at Phillippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, &c. they find no mention of such a Covenant as the Doctrine intendeth, only that they believed, professed, and were Baptised, but no mention

tion of an express vocal Covenant.

1. Though it be not mentioned in those *Ans. 1.*
 Texts, yet it may be in others. 2. We need
 not be solicitous about the words, if the
 thing be found there. 3. And that the thing
 is to be found there, it may be evinced
 three ways: 1. From their being bapti-
 sed. 2. From the phrases. 3. From the simi-
 litudes, which import their covenanting
 together. 1. From their being baptized;
 which presupposeth, that they were first
 made Disciples, because their Commission
 required that, *Mat. 28. 19.* where, *to*
make Disciples, is as much as to gather
 and plant Churches, by visible bringing
 men into Christs school, with engagement;
 by those ot years, for themselves and their
 seed, to submit unto Christs teaching and
 government therein. This school of Christ
 is the Church of God, whence the mem-
 bers of Christian Churches are called, *Dis-*
ciples, in *Act. 15. 10.* So then, they were
 in Church-fellowship, before they were
 baptised.

2. From the Phrases, which imply
 covenanting to be that, whereby they be-
 came visible members of the Church. I
 shall instance in two. The first is used in
Act. 2. 41. *προστέθειται*, were added;
 and *v. 47.* *προστίθει*, the Lord added: and

Calvin in
A^ct. 2. 41.
adjuncti
Christi di-
scipulis,
vel in i-
dem corpore
institi.

chap. 5. 14. προσετιθετο, were the more added. The word imports such an adding as did visibly and firmly knit them together. Calvin saith, they were joyned to Christs Disciples, or ingrafted into the same body. That which thus visibly ingrafted them, was not Gods working Faith in their hearts, or their visible profession of it : for it is said, Believers, were added. v. 14. which is of the same import with, those that gladly received the Word, in A^ct. 2. 41. Therefore this adding was by something else ; and what could that be, but their visible taking hold of the Covenant with that particular Christian Congregation, whereunto they now joyned themselves notwithstanding their former state in the National Church of the Jewes ? And that they were thus added to the Church, Luke confirmeth two ways. 1. by the effect of this ingagement, in A^ct. 2. 42. ἡτοιμασθαι δὲ προσκατεπέσθαι, they were strongly and constantly knit together (viz. by vertue of their former mutual ingagement) in the Apostles Doctrine, Hearing, Believing, Professing, Obeying it constantly ; and in fellowship, i.e. in Church Communion, into which they were combined and compacted before, having solemnly given up themselves, first to the Lord, and then

*then to the Apostles and Church, by the will of God, as Paul expoundeth it, in 2Cor. 8: 5. 2. Luke confirmeth the same sense of their being added to the Church, by expressing the manner of it to be so, as of the rest durst no man joyn himself to them, in Act. 5: 13: yet they did magnifie them, i. e. they approved their doctrine and way, and confessed the truth and goodness of it: All which was not sufficient to add them so to the Church, as believers were added, viz. by publick voluntary engagement with the Church, mutually. And this to be the meaning, Luke confirmeth, by using another word, synonimous with this, which more plainly expresseth the manner of their being added to the Church, *καταδέχαι*, to be glewed: which word, though it sometimes signifieth joyning; in a more common and lax sense, yet not in matters of this nature: Therefore, according to *Tertullian's* rule, *Deligendus est sensus e materia dicti*: and then we know, that all joyning unto a Corporation, must be done by Covenant, as it is in Marriage; and voluntary services, to both which relations the same Verb is applied; to Marriage, in *Mat. 19. 5.* to voluntary service, in *Luk. 15. 15.* both which are by voluntary covenant. This is the strong knitting glew*

whereby persons are joyned together in all such voluntary relations. So much may serve for explication of the phrase.

3. The third proof is from the similitudes used in the New Testament, to express their covenanting together. The Church is compar'd to a House, to the Body-natural, to a Body-corporate, to a Wife.

1. To an *House*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. the whole Society is called, *the household of Faith*, *Gal.* 6. 10. every member of it is said to be, *of the Household of God*, *Eph.* 2. 19. Whether you speak of an House, in an Architectonical sense, the materials must be cemented together; now, in the Church, that cement is the Covenant; or, in an oeconomicall sense, the Members that are voluntarily added, as voluntary Servants to the Family, are joyned with the rest by Covenant; so it must be in the Church, *Eph.* 2. 21.

2. To the Natural-body, in man; the Head of it is Jesus Christ, the Members are Beleivers, the whole is made up essentially, when they are harmonically joyned, and strongly compacted together by mutual engagement to submit one to another in the Lord, whereby they fall, as it were into joynts; as the Thigh falleth into the Knee, and the Shoulder into the Shoulder-blade, by shooting it self into the hollow

hollow of it, and is firmly knit to it, *Ephes.* 4. 15, 16.

3. To a Body-Corporate. Hence the Church is called *the holy City*, *Rev.* 11. 2. and Church-members, *Citizens with the Saints*, *Ephes.* 2. 19. That whereby the Church is as a *City compacted* together, is the Covenant. For as all Citizens are admitted into *jus Civitatis*, and become free Denizens, by voluntary entering into the common engagement and covenant, whereby they become a Political-body; so it is in the Church.

4. To a Wife, whether espoused or married. All espousals and marriages, are by a voluntary mutual Covenant, *Prov.* 2. 17. *Mal.* 2. 14. So it is in the Church of God, *Isa.* 62. 5. Hence *Paul* stileth the particular Church at *Corinth*, a *Virgin espoused*, *2 Cor.* 11. 2. To shew that all the members were joyned, as one Virgin, into one body, and that Virgin-Church, into a Covenant of espousals with Jesus Christ, as their Head and Husband, in all his Offices, and one with another, in him, mutually. Thus, we see, the phrases and similitudes, in the New Testament, do strongly confirm this truth, That the first Christian Churches planted by the Apostles, were constituted, in respect of their

essential form, in one body among themselves severally and respectively, by an holy Covenant. If any demand, why the Apostles did not expressly mention the word, *Covenant*. Two reasons are given for that; 1. That it was not necessary; seeing it had been so clearly and fully expressed in the old Testament, as that which gives essential being to the Church. And it is usual in Scripture, that duties, which are grounded upon a natural, or moral, and common reason and equity, and have been largely expressed in the old Testament, are but briefly and implicitly pointed at in the New: as the Baptizing of Infants, the Christian Sabbath, and the manner of sanctifying it; so this of the Church-Covenant. Yet concerning all these, sufficient light is held forth in the New Testament, for manifesting the mind of God unto his People.

2. That it was not seasonable and safe for the Churches, then living under Heathen Princes and Rulers, enemies to Christ, unto whose jealousies the name of *Covenant*, and *Covenanters* might render them obnoxious, and might seem dangerous to the civil peace. Therefore Christ and his Apostles chose rather to forbear mentioning the name, yet established the thing
under

under such similitudes and parables, as might hide it from others, and yet reveal it to the Saints.

From the voluntary relation, which is 3. Reas.
between the Members of the Church, together with their mutual interest one in another, and their mutual power one over another; all which do necessarily imply their mutual covenanting one with another. 1. Their relation is voluntary; and all voluntary relations are by covenant; as, between a Society or Corporation, and the Members of it; between Husbands and Wives; between Masters and voluntary Servants; So, between a Church and the Members of it; both parties, before, were free, the one, to offer himself into fellowship, or not; the other, to admit him, or not. If such joyn together it is by their free consent, and must be by mutual engagement. Hence ariseth their special and particular relation to this Church, and among themselves mutually, as a body distinct from other Churches. 2. Their interest one in another, and power one over another mutually, ariseth from their mutual engagement by covenant. No Church can judge any inhabitant among them, unless he first give up himself to the Lord and them, in a

professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ. Nor can any inhabitant expect member-like watchfulness and helpfulness from the Church, unless, upon his offering himself to enter into the common ingagement, they receive him, and take upon them that care over him. 3. Their constant fellowship in Church-priviledges, ariseth from this mutual ingagement by Covenant. For none can be admitted unto them, without consent of the body: nor can the body admit them thereunto, without their taking hold of the Covenant: for, till then, they are not under the power of the whole; as it hath been proved.

Object.

There seems to be no need of Church-Covenants, seeing the Covenant of Grace conveigheth to Beleivers all Spiritual blessings, and bindeth them to all Christian duties.

Answer. I.

The Spiritual blessings communicated by Christ unto Believers, through the Covenant of Grace, are of two sorts. 1. Internal, viz. Adoption, Justification, Sanctification, &c. together with the blessed right unto all the outward good things of this life, 1 Tim. 4. 8. and a remote or mediate right unto Church-priviledges. These, all Believers have from Christ by the Covenant of Grace, as they are Believers in sincerity

sincerity and truth, in the sight of God.

2. External, viz. Church-fellowship, and power of the Keys, &c. These, visible Believers have from Christ, through the Covenant of Grace, as they are confederates, and joyned with the Church by taking hold of the Covenant. This difference is between them; The former are limited to the persons of true Believers in the sight of God, *Hab. 2. 4.* The latter are given to a society of true Believers, in the account of the Church, and are extended to their seed also, *Exod. 20. 6.*

2. Though the Covenant of Grace received by us, binds us to all Christian duties required in the Gospel, yet it binds us also to do them in the due order: for God is the God of order, and not of confusion. Therefore such duties as issue from voluntary relations, must be done only by those who stand in such relations. Will any Man or Woman infer from his or her being in the Covenant of Grace, that therefore there is no need or use of a conjugal Covenant, but that he hath right to all Women, and she to all Men, to perform conjugal duties with them, where ever they come, though they are not joyned to any of them by a conjugal Covenant? The like reason is of all other duties

duties which are founded in other voluntary relations; as between Masters and Servants, Pastor and People, Corporations and the Members of them, particular Churches and their Members. Therefore the Covenant of Grace binds all Believers to such mutual covenanting together, as is necessary for the orderly discharge of the several duties that are to be performed by vertue of such a state and relation. Thus the conclusion is proved.

1. *Coralary.*

Hence it will follow, that it is not sufficient to make one a visible member of this or that Church, that he is joyned to it in hearty affection, or in neighbourhood of habitation, or in ordinary hearing the Word preached among them. For, 1. the members of several Churches may be so joyned; yea, 2. they that are members of no particular Church, may so joyn with Church assemblies. All these might be affirmed of those who durst not joyn as members, to the Church at *Jerusalem*, *Act. 5. 13.* And of that Heathen *Corinthian*, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* 3. All these may be found in an excommunicate.

2. *Coralary.*

Then Baptism and profession of the doctrine of Faith, with freedom from public scandal, do not formally constitute a Church, nor make one a visible member of the

the Church. 1. Not Baptism; 1. because the form must be before the *formatum*, not after it: but the Congregational-Church is before Baptism. For, 1. Baptism cannot ordinarily be orderly administered, but by a Minister called unto Office by the Church. 2. Because Baptism sealeth the Covenant, and incorporation of a Believer and his seed into the visible Church. 1 Cor. 12, 13. Therefore Baptism is not before, but after the Church: Because where the form is, there the *formatum* must be also. But visible Church-membership may cease by excommunication or desertion, or by the dissolution of a Church; yet Baptism remaineth.

2. Not profession of the Doctrine of Faith, though accompanied with freedom from scandalous sins. For general profession cannot appropriate a man particularly to any one Church, without particular ingagement to that particular body. 2. Nor doth it bring any one under the power of this or that Church, which it hath over its own Members, and other Churches have not. 3. If that were sufficient; a man should become a member of any particular Church whether it will or no.

Then a Member of one particular Congregation, 3. Coral.

gregation, is not, thereby, a Member of all visible Congregations on earth. For, though a Church-covenant be common to all Churches, in its general nature; yet there is a speciall combination, which gives a peculiar being to one Congregational-Church and its members, distinct from all others. Else, how could one Church have that power over its own Members, which another hath not? And in all voluntary covenants, the only difference between them is, the peculiar interest which one hath in another, by a particular ingagement that passeth between party and party. Covenants of Corporations, of Marriages, of Service, and the like, are, in general, common to all that are in those and the like relations; Yet, in particular appropriation, bind them only to this or that individual. No man can claim a memberlike right in all Corporations, because he is in covenant with one, upon this plea, that Corporation-covenants are common to all Societies: nor can an Husband plead, that he hath a conjugal right in all Wives, because conjugal-covenant is common to all married persons. The same holds in Churches, which are distinguished one from another by their respective Covenants. Other absurdities that proceed

proceed from this Tenet, I shall pretermitt.

Then the Children of the Church, notwithstanding their membership, which they had, during their minority, by their Parents covenant; yet they must, when they are grown up, joyn themselves to the Church by their voluntary taking hold of the Covenant publickly with the Church, in their own personal right, before they may be admitted to exercise all acts of Church-communion, and to partake of all Church-priviledges for themselves, and before their Children may be Baptized.

1. I say, before they may be admitted to exercise all acts of Church-communion, and to partake of all Church-priviledges, for themselves.] For, in their minority, they were Members in their Parents, and were Baptized, to seal the Covenant made with them in their Parents, or, with the Parents, for themselves and their children. But when they come to years, they must take hold of the Covenant with the Church, for themselves, because now they are capable of Church-priviledges, in that way which they were not before. If any oppose against this, that Church-membership *non recipit magis et minus*; that argueth only, that one of the confederates is

no

no more engaged to the other, than the other to him : But otherwise, in Confederacies, some are allowed greater liberties than others be, according to the diversity of the subjects, and their capacities. So it is in Civil Societies and Corporations ; the Child of the free-man of London, hath all the benefit of a free-mans Child, under age ; he may trade for himself with and under his Father, in his Fathers right : But being of years, he may not set up shop, nor trade in his own right, till he first take up his freedom, and, by oath, voluntarily submit himself to all the orders of that Society, and duty of a Citizen. Some think, that the Children of Confederates are so compleat members, that they should be excommunicated, in case of demerit. I cannot easily assent therunto ; for that would imply, that they have an immediate right in all Church-priviledges, which I do not grant, nor believe ; but that, as the Church looks upon them *tanquam in lumbis parentum* ; so also, if the grown Members of the Church observe vicious qualities and practises in them, they do not deal with them immediately in those steps of proceeding, required in *Mat. 18*: to bring matters to the Church, but they deal with their Parents

to discharge their duty, in educating their Children according to the rule, in Ephes.

6. 4. To this sense Dr. Ames applyeth that text, in 1Cor. 7. 14. *Infantes tamen*

non adeo perfecta sunt membra Ecclesie, ut possint actus Communionis exercere, aut ad-

mitti ad omnia ejus privilegia participanda, nisi prius incrementum fidei appareat: ab

his vero, quæ pertinent ad initium fidei, et ingressum in Ecclesiam, non sunt excludendi.

2. Nor may their Children be baptized, till themselves have taken hold of the Covenant with the Church, in their own right. For, the Children of Church-members, when they come to age, for not taking hold of the Covenant with the Church, do become non-members, and are to be so looked at by the Church, if they desert Church-fellowship (either departing from them in place, as Esau into mount Seir, or withdrawing from their communion;) or if the Church withdraw from them. In such cases, they are not so much as implicitly members. Therefore their Children may not be baptized. For the right that Infants have unto Baptism, is in their next and immediate Parents. 1. Because the Apostle, in 1Cor. 7. 14. doth so limit it. 2. Because the Apokasy of the next Parents takes off the

Ames. ma-
dalla The-
olog. lib. 1.
cap. 32.
art. 12, 13.

federal

federal holiness of their Seed; as we see in the posterity of *Ismael* and *Esau*. 3. Because if Infants should have this right in their Grand-fathers, where shall we stop? shall it be extended to a thousand Generations, as some mis-apply that promise in *Exod. 20. 6*. That cannot be true: for then the Children of the Jews, and Turks, and Heathen; all the world over, have a right to Baptism, in some of their Ancestors within that time, contrary to *Rom. 11. 17*.

5. *Coral.*

Then Church-covenant is no formidable matter, but desirable. Is it a yoke? 1. It is Christs yoke, which is easie, *Mat. 11. 29, 30*. he will make it easie. Depend upon his faithfulness, as Surety of the Covenant of Grace, for ability to be faithful in your discharge of your Covenant with the Church. 2. It is not a yoke of bondage, but of precious liberties; whereby you have right in all the outward priviledges of the Gospel. 3. Nor is Church-fellowship a prison, but, if God call, they must consent to your remove from them, and follow you with their prayers. It is, indeed, a strong but sweet ingagement of all upright-hearted Christians to please Christ, and to be to his honour, in that state. So doth the Marriage-covenant oblige those that

that are in that state, *1 Cor. 7. 34. & 11. 7.* From whence, the Apostle argueth for the like care in particular Churches, and the Members of them, *Ephes. 5. 24. 2 Cor. 8. 23.* which also was a special end and use of the Covenant, wherein *Abraham* and the Church of the Jews stood bound unto God, *Gen. 17. 1, 2.* and *2 Chron. 34. 31, 32.* and the contrary discovered the insincerity and hypocrisie of others, *Psal. 78. 37.* In like manner it bindeth the Members of the Church to all the duties of their Church-relation mutually, both Officers and People, and quickneth them thereunto; through the influence and assistance of Christ the head of the Church, by his Spirit in them all; *Ephes. 4. 15, 16. 1 Cor. 12. to 28.* And therefore I cannot but wonder, that some, who do approve and plead for all other Covenants, *viz.* National, Conjugal, Social Covenants, should yet dislike, and oppose Church-Covenants.

From the premises we may see when the Church-Covenant is broken, and how great their sin is, who do scandalously and contumaciously persist therein.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the quantity and compass of a Christian Church.

THE Church, which Christ calls his Church, he telleth Peter, that he will build it; *Upon this Rock* (Mat. 16. 18.) *I will build my Church.* Where, the verb is in the first person, and in the future tense.

1. He speaketh in the first Person, not in the second, to shew, that though he will use men, as his instruments, in this work, yet it is his presence and blessing that causeth the work to prosper in their hands, Mat. 28. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 3. 9. It is by the Spirit of the Lord that Church-work is carried on successfully, Zech. 4. 6.

2. He speaketh in the future tense, not in the præter, or present; for, though Christ was in all ages the builder of the Church, yet he thus speaketh of the Church under the New Testament, because it was to be constituted after his Death, Resurrecti-

See Mr.

Bradf.

Ans. to

the Arch.

B. of York

in Mr. Fox

his A. & C.

Mon. in a

Conference

between them

and the Bishop of

Chichester in the

Compter in Breadstreet.

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on and Ascension, when the Gospel should shine forth so clearly, that it should obscure the light of former ages, as the Sun rising in its strength, doth the light of the Stars: and it should appear, bringing *Salvation to all men*, even to the Gentiles, and they should be gathered and joyned unto Christ, that *one Head*, and become *Members of his Body*, together with the believing Jews, in Church-communion visibly, the partition Wall being broken down. And, because all Nations could not be joyned together in one visible Church (as the Nation of the Jews might be, and was) to have their solemn set meetings together, to worship God thrice a year, or once in an age; the Lord Jesus instituted a Congregational-Church among Christians, and invested every such Church with sufficient Church-power within it self, for attainment of all the ends of Church-communion. This is the Church, which Christ saith, he will build, and appropriates it to himself, *My Church*, 1. Because it is his Institution. 2. Because his Name is called and put upon it. The Members of it are, not *Moses* his disciples, but *Christ*s, and therefore were, of old, called *Christians*, Act. 11. 26.

This title of *Church*, though it be gi-

Αναπα-
λασσοντες
τα πάντα εις
την χριστου.
Eph. 1. 10.
συνομιαν. E-
phes. 3. 6.
& 2. 13, 14

ven some times to a civil Assembly; *Act. 19. 41.* yet so it is not taken in this place. For Christ no where calleth a civil Assembly, his Church. Therefore it must signify an holy Society. And in that sense, the Scripture applieth this title sundry wayes. 1. To Godly Families, *Rom. 16. 5. Col. 4. 15. Phil. 2.* where the Church, in such an house, is distinguished from the Congregational Church. For *Paul* writeth to the Congregational Assembly to salute *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, and the Church in their house. Their house, it seemeth, consisted (all) of Godly persons, in *Pauls* judgement; else, he would have said, Salute them of such an house, who are in the Lord: and it was an exemplary Family, and a seminary of the Church, yet not such a Church as was capable of all Church Officers, and power, as this, meant in the text, hath by the gift of Christ. 2. Sometimes it signifieth the Catholick visible Church, *Heb. 12. 23.* but that hath been from the beginning, and doth not, nor can meet in one place, on earth to worship God. Therefore it is not meant here. 3. Most commonly, it signifieth a Congregational Church, or, an holy Society joyned together by an holy Covenant, in one Congregation, to walk together

ther according to all the Ordinances and
 Lawes given by Christ to his Church.
 And so sometimes it signifieth a definite
 particular Congregation, meeting toge-
 ther in one place, for the publick wor-
 ship of God, and their mutual edification:
 as that at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18, 20. and 14.
 23. And in that acceptation, it notes,
 sometimes the Brethren, as distinguished
 from the Elders; *Act.* 15. 22. Sometimes
 the Elders and Brethren assembled toge-
 ther, as in 1 *Cor.* 11. 20. but never, the
 Elders meeting apart from the Brethren.
 But, in this place it doth not signifie a
 particular definite Church. For there is
 no particular Christian Church built by
 Christ more, or rather, than other. It re-
 maineth, that Christ speaks of a parti-
 cular Congregational Church here, in an
 indefinite sense. And so, the word Church
 is applyed in the New Testament, when
Paul saith, he persecuted the Church,
Phil. 3. 6. Not, that at *Jerusalem* only, or
Damascus, but all the Churches in Judea,
Gal. 1. 22, 23. In this sense, Christ calls
 every Christian Congregational Church,
 thus built, his Church.

From the words thus opened, this
 doctrinal conclusion is to be collected,
viz. That it is the will and appointment

of Jesus Christ, that the Christian Church, under the New Testament, be, in respect of its quantity and compass, Congregational.

4. *Concl.* This we shall endeavour to prove, both by Scripture and Reason. 1. The Scripture, in the writings of the Apostles, clearly sheweth, that they so understood this branch of the Church-Charter, and therefore they speak of Christian-Churches, as several and distinct from one another, *1Cor.* 11. 16. and 14. 33. Yea, in one and the same Country, as *Galatia*, *Gal.* 1. 2. *Judea*, *v.* 22. *Macedonia*. *2Cor.* 8. 1. Yea in *Corinth*, where God had much people, *Act.* 18. 10. yet the Church there was but one Congregation, *1Cor.* 14. and, though *Cenchrea* was a Port near unto *Corinth*, yet it had a Church distinct from *Corinth*; *Rom.* 16. 1. The Church also in *Jerusalem*, though a greater number of Believers was declared to be there, than we read of in other Cities, yet it was but one Congregation; *Act.* 2. 41, 44, 47. and 6. 2, 15. The same holdeth concerning other great Cities; the Church, in every one of them, was Congregational: and, if the number of Believers grew too great for one Congregation, doubtless more Churches were gathered in such a place and

and ease : & if several parts of the Church met in times of Persecution, now and then, here and there, as they might ; yet they continued one Congregation, having the same Officers, in common, for any thing appears in Scripture to the contrary. Now let us see, why the Christian Church must be Congregational.

The first Reason is from the end of 1. Reas. Church-fellowship, which is mutual edification, in the use of the means instituted by Christ thereunto. *Let all things be done unto edification*, 1. Cor. 14. 26. but how can this be attained, unless they so meet together, *that all may learn, and all may be comforted*. v. 13 ? Hence all the Members of the Church are exhorted, not to *forsake their assembling together*, Heb. 10. 25. which was the praise of the primitive Church in *Jerusalem*, *Act. 2. 42, 44*. Therefore a particular visible Church is compared to a flock, which are fed together, *Act. 20. 28* ; and to an House or Family, the members whereof enjoy the same Family-privileges in common, under the same family-order, 1 *Tim. 3. 15*.

The second Reason is, from their duty 2. Reas. to take up offences among Brethren, which cannot be ended privately, *Mat. 18. 17, 18.* which implyeth two things. 1. That the

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Church must consist of more than *two or three*: for though *two or three* may watch over one another, admonish one another; and, in case of obstinacy, withdraw from a convicted delinquent: and, though *two or three* praying together, may expect the presence and blessing of Christ, as *v. 19, 20.* upon their admonition; yet *two or three* cannot issue the matter compleatly, in way of Church-censure, but must tell the Church: Therefore the Church must necessarily consist of a greater number. Again, how can *two or three* choose the four sorts of Officers amongst themselves, which are described by four living creatures, in *Rev. 4. 6, 7. viz. Pastor, Teacher, Ruling Elder, and Deacon?* 2. That they must not exceed the quantity and compass of one Congregation. For the Church must meet ordinarily together with their Officers, for these purposes. Therefore the Scripture sheweth that the whole Church did meet together to chuse and ordain Officers, as Deacons, *Act. 6. 2, 3, 5.* Elders, *Act. 14. 23.* to receive and admit Members, *Act. 9. 26.* for Prophecy-ing, *1 Cor. 14. 23.* for the Seals, *1 Cor. 11. 20.* and for Censures, *1 Cor. 5. 4.* and to release from censures: *2 Cor. 2. 6, 7.* So much for proof of the point. The Con-
fessionaries are these. Then

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Then the Congregational frame of a 1. Coroll.
Christian Church is no humane invention, or constitution. True it is, that the Parish frame, as it was wont to joyn all the inhabitants within such a præinct, into one Church, injoyning them all to communicate at the Lords Table, at least at Easter, is meerly humane, not being measured by the Golden Reed, which is the Church-measure, but by the Court-measure, Rev. 11. 1, 2. But that Members so qualified as Christ requireth, and so confederating, should ordinarily meet to gather in one Congregation, for the solemn worship of God, and their mutual edification, is the Ordinance of Christ, and according to the measure of the golden Reed, whereby the City and Gates, and the dimensions of the New-Jerusalem are measured, Rev. 21. 15. that they shall not be so few, as to cut off Church-jurisdiction within themselves; nor so many, but that all may hear and be edified, and be governed by the Power, which Christ hath given to the Church to preserve the purity of his Worship, and of their fellowship within themselves.

Then, when a People grow to be so 2. Coroll.
numerous in any Church, that they can-

not ordinarily meet together; to Church-ends; it is the mind of Christ, that they should be distributed into sundry Congregational Churches. For, though many thousands of Israel met together in the court of the Temple at Jerusalem to offer Sacrifice; because they might stand in so large a place together and see the Sacrifices burnt; yet that will not prove, that such multitudes should be Members of a Christian Church, where more communion is required, then in seeing some one Ordinance performed.

3. *Corall.* Then, it is not arbitrary, but a duty for every Christian, to endeavour to joyn himself in Membership with a Congregational instituted Church of Christ: who-soever have opportunity, and neglect so to do, they greatly sin against God, and break the second Commandment, in not worshipping him according to his institution: and also against their own souls, in depriving themselves of the blessing, which he hath annexed unto his Institution; *Exod. 20. 24. Mat. 28. 20.* and if they persist in that neglect, they can hardly be accounted Believers truly seeking the Kingdom of God, what profession of Religion soever they make otherwise, *Mat. 6. 33.* and they sin against their posterity also.

to whom God promifeth mercy, upon their parents worshipping him according to his Institutions : If the Lord doth good to the posterity of fuch, it is meerly from his own good pleasure, but not from their Parents Covenant, *Ezek. 16. 61.*

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Churches impregnable stability.

TO the Church built by Christ upon this Rock, he hath promised and given this great priviledge, *that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*] *πύλαι ᾗδου*] *ᾗδης*, in the Scripture, signifieth, not Hell, but the state of the dead, or the Grave, *θάνατος* & *ᾗδης* are enemies vanquished by Christ for his Church, *1 Cor. 15. 26, 55.* and shal be cast into the lake of fire, *Rev. 20. 14.* *πύλαι ᾗδης* are the gates of Death, in *Job. 38. 17. Psal. 107. 18.* and the gates of the Grave, *Isa. 38. 10.* i. e. the power of Death and the Grave, which seizeth on them, as a Serjeant, *Psal. 116. 3.* The sum is ; Let the Church be brought to the lowest, that it seems to be dead,

as those two Witnesses, Rev. 11. 8. 9. and buried, as Christ's natural body was, for a time; yet neither Death, nor the Grave shall prevail against it. Yet we must not limit the sense of these words, only to the power of Death and the Grave, but it must be extended to all Satans plots and assaults against the Church, against which if Christ did not help them, Death and the Grave would prevail against them, to their eternal destruction. We conclude therefore, that, in this Text, by *the gates of Hell*, are meant, all the machinations of Satan, and temptations whatsoever, whereby he laboureth to hinder the building of Christs Church, to draw those from Christ, who are built upon him. *The prevailing* of them signifies their effectual working unto the attainment of those ends. The sum is, a promise that the Devil, with all his policies and powers, shall neither hinder the building of Christs Church, nor cause the Church thus built to apostatize from Christ. And that this is the true sense and meaning of the words, whatsoever Socinians, or Arminians say to the contrary, may thus be evinced; 1. Because the thing promised, is the disabling of what ever opposeth the building of the Church upon this Rock;
or

or its constant adhering to Christ, from
 prevailling to those ends : but so do Sa-
 ran's temptations ; Therefore they are
 meant by the gates of Hell. 2. Because
 whatsoever goeth forth out of the gates
 of Hell, or hath its beginning from thence,
 is meant in this phrase : but the Temp-
 tations and Machinations of Saran, by
 himself and his instruments, Hereticks
 and Tyrants, go forth thence ; There-
 fore they are meant in this phrase. 3. Be-
 cause *Peter*, to whom Christ spake these
 words, describes unbelievers, the adver-
 saries of this building, as belonging to the
 gates of Hell ; 1 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. 4. Because the
 proportion, which Christ implies, in these
 words, requireth that they be so under-
 stood. The proportion is between two Ci-
 ties, that of Heaven, which hath its gates,
 and keys, in *v.* 19. and the other of Hell,
 which hath its gates; whence it endeavors
 the ruine and overthrow of that, but shall
 not prevail. Seeing therefore City is op-
 posed to City, and Gates to Gates, and one
 (*viz.* the Church) is considered in the
 state of present building ; it is most sura-
 ble that the other be also looked at, as it
 opposeth that, in the present, whilst it is
 militant upon earth. But from hence, that
 Christ promiseth that the gates of Hell
 shall

shall not prevail against his Church thus built, some infer, that Christ meaneth only *the invisible Catholick Church*: For that only, say they, is bulit on this Rock, and only that shall not fail. *Ans. 1.* It is true, that the Catholick invisible Church is built upon Christ, by effectual and unfeigned Faith, and that shall not fail: For that is *the general Assembly, and Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in Heaven*, Heb. 12. 23. And all the gates of Hell cannot prevail against those that are written in Heaven. 2. But it is not true, that these only are built on this Rock. The Apostle *Paul* tells us, that a particular visible Church, rightly constituted, as that at *Corinth*, is built upon this Rock, or Rocky-foundation, 1 Cor. 3. 10, 11. and being so built, is under the special protection of God in Christ; in respect whereof the Lord promiseth any such Church, as well among the *Gentiles*, as the *Jews*, *Whosoever shall gather himself against thee, shall fall*, Isa. 54. 15. and *all the weapons that are made against thee shall not prosper*, vers. 17. And it is clear, that Christ, in this place, speaks of such a Church as is built upon the confession of Faith, such as *Peter* made, visibly and publickly; whereupon, not the invisible
Catho-

Catholick Church, but visible particular Churches are built : Therefore these only are meant here.

The Church of Christ, built by himself 5. *Concl.*
upon this Rock, in using the means which he hath appointed for their safety, is impregnable. The Church of Christ is here indefinitely taken, for a particular Congregational-Church instituted by Christ, according to the sense of the former conclusions, not, for this or that, definitely.

Therefore if any object, that the gates of Hell have prevailed against the Greek-Churches, those *golden Candlesticks* in *Asia*, and against *Rome*, whose *Faith was spoken of throughout the whole World*, and against sundry other particular Churches?

I Answer, 1. Though it be true, that the *Answe*
gates of Hell have prevailed against this or that particular Church; yet not against a particular Church, indefinitely considered, or (which is the same) against the Church, in general, existing in its particulars. In this sense, the visible Church doth not fail. For, (1.) Christ ever had, and will have some or other visible Church on Earth, wherein the general nature of a visible Church is preserved, as the *Genus* is in its *Species*, and the nature
of

of man in this or that individual; as when the Lord preserved *Noah* and his Family, in the Ark, mankind was preserved in them, though multitudes of men were destroyed in the Deluge. (2.) Christ will shew, that he makes a difference between Churches, wherein are some true Believers mixed with many Hypocrites, and other Societies. Therefore he will not suffer such visible Churches to be totally destroyed, as he doth his open enemies, *Hos.* 11. 8, 9. *Isa.* 1. 8, 9. & 6. 13. 2. Though it be true, that the Churches of *Asia* and *Rome* have been prevailed against by the gates of Hell, yet not, as they were built by Christ, or planted by the Apostles, but their degenerate Posterity and Successors, who were not built on this Rock, but on an outward Form, and neglected the means appointed by Christ for their safety. The Apostle *Paul* forewarned the *Romans* to beware of Apostacy, by the example of the *Jews*, *Rom.* 11. 12. They, nevertheless, in succeeding generations, did degenerate from the Faith and Profession of their Predecessors, and so fell into the gulf of *Antichristian* Apostacy. But, as when God took his visible Kingdom from the *Jews*, for their obstinacy in unbelief, he did not destroy his

his visible Kingdom totally from the face of the Earth, but *gave it to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, Mat. 21. 43.* So, though, in his righteous judgement against Apostates, he may destroy this, or that particular Congregational Church; yet the *gates of Hell* shall not prevail wholly against the Church-state, but it shall be preserved. He doth but translate the Candlestick, not break it all to pieces; he doth but remove it out of one place into another, *Rev. 2. 5.* and still preserveth it, in some particular Congregation, or other. 3. Though the gates of Hell have sometime, and in some degree, prevailed against this or that particular visible Church, *holding fast the profession of their Faith without wavering*; yet they have not prevailed according to the meaning of these words. They have prevailed *κατὰ τὴν*, only in some respect; as, 1. in Temporals, to impoverish them, *Heb. 10. 34.* to bring them under bondage, as *Pharaoh* did the Israelites; to establish a decree for their destruction, as *Haman* did against the Jews; to put multitudes of them to death, as the ten persecuting Emperors did the Christians, and as the high Priest and the Jews dealt with Christ. 2. In Spirituals, 1. to scatter the Members of the

F Church

Church ; so far the gates of Hell prevail-
ed against them , upon occasion of
Stephen, *Act. 8. 1.* and to cause the Wo-
man to flye into the Wilderness, *Rev. 12.*
2. To assault them with temptations ; as
Christ told *Peter*, that Satan had desired
to winnow him like *Wheat*.

But they could not prevail against the
Church , *absolutely and totally.* 1. Not
against all of them in *Smyrna*, by outward
calamities, *Rev. 2. 10.* Nor against all in
Sardis, by temptation, *Rev. 3. 4.* 2. Nor
totally against the whole Church. For
God did raise up unexpected helps ; for
the Woman fled into the Wilderness, *Rev.*
12. 6, 14, 16. to that part of them, which
remains on earth ; and, for the other part
of them, God will receive his people, when
outward subsistence fails , into everlasting
habitations , *Luke 16. 9.* And, when the
gates of Hell prevail, to the dispersion of
a particular Church built on this Rock, yet
that is not to their destruction, but tend-
eth to the multiplication , and enlarge-
ment of particular Churches. The di-
spersion of the Church at *Jerusalem*, was
like the dispersion of Seed into the Field ,
which bringeth forth a more plentiful
Harvest ; so , their dispersion prevailed
against the gates of Hell, to the propa-
gating

gating of sundry Churches, *Act. 11. 19, 21.*
 Thus the Lord turned the Policies of the
 gates of Hell against themselves, accord-
 ing to that promise, *Zach. 12. 3.* Thus we
 see the impregnable stability of Christ his
 Church built upon this Rock.

We shall now prove by Reason, that it
 must be so.

From Christ, who is the Head of the
 visible Church, as well as of the invisible, *1. Reas.*
1 Cor. 12. 27. And he will not suffer the
 sound Members of his Body to be plucked
 and torn from it, by the gates of Hell. He
 is the builder of his Church, *Heb. 3. 3, 4.*
 and therefore will establish it. When the
 Ark was built by *Noah*, as Gods Instru-
 ment, according to God's appointment,
 it stood against all the power of the De-
 luge. He is the Foundation, as he is be-
 lived, and publicly confessed, whereup-
 on he buildeth his Church. Against an
 House so built, the Winds and Waves
 cannot prevail, *Matth. 7. 24, 25.*

From the Promises given to such a
 Church, which are of two sorts. *2. Reas.*
1. For protection, *Isa. 4. 5, 6.* where he pro-
 phesieth concerning the Church of Christ
 under the New Testament, and describes
 Gods protection over them, by a twofold
 allusions: *1. By the Pillar of Cloud and*

Fire that protected the people of *Israel*, at the Red Sea, from *Pharaoh* and his Host. 2. By the covering of the Tabernacle, and the holy things in it from all injuries of weather, *Exod.* 26. 14. *Rev.* 7. 16. And his power is ingaged to perform his promise, *Job.* 10. 28, 29. And his Providence will order all issues and events thereunto, *Isa.* 54. 16, 17. *Mat.* 28. 18, 20. 2ly. For victory, *Rom.* 16. 20. If the Lord will tread Satan under their feet, he will see to it that Satan shall not tread them under his feet.

3^{Reas.}

From the titles given to particular visible Churches. They are frequently, in the New Testament, called the Kingdom of Heaven; and Hell cannot prevail against Heaven. They are called the Kingdom of Christ, and God the Father hath established his Kingdom by an oath, *Psal.* 89. 35, 36. To confirm our Faith herein, he calls the Sun and Moon to be witnesses, *vers.* 37. The Sun may be clouded sometimes, and Moon is sometimes in the Full, sometimes in the Wane, but still it is in the Heaven: So it is with the Church on Earth. *Semper & fuisse in terra, & futuram deinceps Ecclesiam, non dubitamus: quanquam ejus aspectum aliquando illustrem ut conspici ab omnibus possit, aliquando*

Dr. Whit.
ad Rat.
Camp.
Resp. p. 56.

*aliquando tantâ caligine, ut vix agnoscat,
obscuratam esse fateamur.*

And it belongs to Christ, to break the Serpent's Head ; who can proceed no further than to bruise his heel, *Gen. 3. 15.* He is that little stone that brake the Image to pieces, which represented the Monarchies and Powers, whereby the gates of Hell sought to prevail against Christ and his Church, *Dan. 2. 45.* Christs Church is called an House of prayer to all Nations, *Isa. 56. 7.* The Israel of God, *Gal. 6. 16.* in allusion to the change of *Jacobs* name, who by prayer obtained victory and protection against *Esau*, *Gen. 32. 28.* *Hos. 12. 2, 3.* So shall the Church of Christ, by prayer, obtain deliverance from the gates of Hell, that they shall not prevail against them.

From the state of the Devils themselves, 4. *Reas.*
and all their instruments. 1. They are cursed. *Gen. 12. 3.* *I will curse them that curse thee;* therefore they shall not prosper in their interprizes against the Church of Christ. 2. They were conquered, and captivated, and triumphed over by Christ, before he did build his Church, *Ephes. 4. 8, 12.* Therefore shall not hinder the building of it, nor destroy it being built. 3. They are enemies unto Christs Kingdom :
F 3

dom: Therefore shall not prevail. Ps. 2. 2, 3, 4. and, 110. 1, 2. Let us briefly note some Corollaries hence.

Then in vain boasteth that Roman Synagogue, of the infallibility of their Popes, as *Peter's* successors, and of the indeficiency of their Church, as built upon *Peter*; when as, neither had *Peter* himself any such priviledge, as to be infallible. The next story in this 16th of *Matthew* evineth the contrary, v. 23. Nor, by *the Rock*, whereupon Christ builds his Church, is meant the person of *Peter*, or *Peter's* confession personally, as it had relation to him, but as it is considered really in it self, and is common to all the Disciples, and to all visible Believers, which may be thus confirmed: 1. Because *Peters* confession must have relation to the matter which he confessed. But *Peter* confessed not himself, but Christ, saying, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*; Therefore his confession had relation to Christ, not to himself. 2. Because *Peter* confessed no more than that which he knew the other Disciples believed before he spake: For Christ's question being general, *What say ye?* *Peter* answered, as the mouth of the rest: but the Apostles, before he spake, believed Christ confessed, and not *Peter* confessing

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feſſing. 3. Becauſe, this *Rock*, is that con-
 feſſion whereupon Chriſt ſaith he will
 build his Church: But whoſoever ſhall
 truly believe that which *Peter* confeſſed,
viz. Chriſt the Son of the living God, and
 confeſs or profeſs it, in due order, is ac-
 cordingly *built on this Rock*, though he
 had never heard of *Peter's* name. There-
 fore the confeſſion, rightly underſtood,
 had relation unto Chriſt, and not to the
 perſon of *Peter*. 4. Becauſe the *Rock* ſig-
 niſieth that which is immoveable and
 impregnable, ſuch as is Chriſt and his
 truth: But *Peter's* confeſſion was mov-
 able and ſhaken, at one time, thrice deny-
 ing this confeſſion of his Lord. There-
 fore this confeſſion, which Chriſt calls the
 Rock, had not relation to *Peter*, but only
 to Chriſt.

Then they that would have a particu- 2. *Coroll.*
 lar Church to be impregnable, ſtable, and
 firm againſt the prevailing of the gates of
 Hell, muſt ſee that it be built upon this
 Rock, and not upon humane formes.

1. That Chriſt himſelf be the builder of it, ** Ex quo pater, quod Eccleſia,*
 according to his own inſtitutions, not the *non confi-*
 policies or cuſtoms of men. 2. ** That the ſtit in ho-*
minibus, ratione poteſtatis vel dignitatis Eccleſiaſtica, vel
ſecularis &c. ſed in illis perſonis, in quibus eſt noſſia vera,
& confeſſio fidei & veritatis. Lyra in loc.

materials, of which it consists, be such, as believe and profess their Faith in Christ publicly before the Lord, and his People. 3. That they be firmly joyned together, in one Congregation, by an holy Covenant of subjection and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to one another in him, and accordingly walk together in obedience to Christ, and his Rules, resisting Satan in all his Temptations and Machinations, through Christ strengthening them, without whom they can do nothing, *Joh. 15. 5.* and that they improve carefully and faithfully the power, which Christ hath given them, *viz. the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, in opening and shutting, binding and loosing, according to Christ his appointment, for the preserving of his Church safe in the purity of their Faith and Order, against *the gates of Hell*, which is the next thing to be handled.

The Second Part.

CHAP. VI.

*Concerning the power given of Christ
unto such a Church, as the first
and proper subject of it.*

THE second branch or part of the Charter, is, concerning the Power given by Christ unto such Churches, to have and use all the means appointed by him for their establishment against the the gates of Hell, *Mat. 16. 19. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* These words contain, 1. A grant of Power. 2. A ratification of that Grant. We shall speak to them distinctly. 1. To Christ his grant of Power; and therein, 1. Explicate the terms, by shewing, what is meant, 1 by *the Kingdom of Heaven*; 2. by *the Keys* of it 3 What this appropriation,

priation, or application of them imports,
To thee I will give.

1. By *the Kingdom of Heaven*] is meant, both the Kingdom of Grace & Glory; and that the Kingdom of Glory is also meant, the following words shew, when he saith, *What you bind on Earth, is bound in Heaven, &c.* 2. By the Keys (which are a sign of Power, and are put, by a Metonymy, for the Subject, the Power it self) is meant, Church-power; which is either Supreme, and Sovereign, in Christ only, as Lord and Head of his Church, who alone hath the Key of David, *which openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;* in *Rev.* 3. 7. or subordinate and delegate, such as is in Christ's Stewards. This is noted, by *Keys*, in the Plural number, in this place, which signifie all power delegated from Christ, to dispense and administer all the holy things of his House, according to Christ's will, and in the order prescribed by him to that end. For all power, wherewith the Lord Jesus betrusteth his Church, aims at this which is here expressed, *to open, and shut, to bind, and loose.* 3. *To thee I will give*] The Application of this Grant is to Peter, in the name of the Church, which Christ promised to build upon himself, believed on

on, and publickly professed, as *Parr* did before him, and his fellow-Disciples in Christs School, at this time. And the promise is more fitly given to *Peter*, in the name of the Church, than to the Church by name, because it was not the Church that made this confession, but *Peter* in the name of the Church. But here we must make a little stand, to examine the sundry claims which have been made to this Right, upon several pretences from this Text. 1. Some, looking at *Peter*, as representing the Catholick visible-Church, conceive that a *general Council* (which, they say, is the Catholick Church, representatively) is the Church here meant, to which Christ gives the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. But that cannot be. For particular visible Churches, in the Apostles dayes, had, and exercised, the *Keyes* compleatly within themselves; yet was there no general Council, till the time of *Constantine*, which was three hundred years after Christ. 2. Others look at this Grant, as peculiar to *Peter*, considered, as the Prince and chief of the Apostles, and to the Popes of *Rome*, as his successors. But this *Papal* usurpation, the Councils of *Constance* and *Basil* strongly and justly opposed, shewing, that the *Keyes*, which
are

are here given to *Peter*, are, in *Joh. 20. 21, 22, 23.* given to all the Apostles, and that *Peter* himself is enjoined in *Mat. 18.* to tell the Church. 3. Others think, that the Catholick Church, considered, not representatively, but in it self, is the first subject of the Keys : Yet these differ among themselves. For some affirm it of the invisible, others of the visible Catholick Church. As for the terms ; we know, that *visible & invisible*, do not note distinct *species* or *kindes* of Churches, but are only several adjuncts of the same Church, which is called *invisible*, in respect of the inward and invisible union, which Members have with Christ the Head, by the Spirit and Faith ; and *visible*, in respect of their outward Profession of their Faith, which is visible to men. But in neither of these senses, is the Catholick Church the first subject of the Keys. 1. Not *as invisible* ; for that is not built by a visible profession, such as *Peter's* was ; nor are the Ordinances dispensed or administered visibly in it ; to, or by men in visible fellowship. Add hereunto, that the Keys here given to *Peter* , can shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, even the same persons, to whom they have opened the door before ; which cannot befall Believers in the visible Church.

2. Not *as visible*. For the Scripture doth not acknowledge a Catholick visible Church. The Catholick Church is not visible, as a Church, and the Church that is visible is not Catholick. Though the Catholick Church may be visible in its singular Members; yet so, they are not a Church: or, though it may be visible in particular Congregations; yet none of them is Catholick: or, though all of them, if they could meet together, may be called a Catholick Church, or general Assembly; yet so, it cannot be the first subject of the Keys, *i.e.* of all Ecclesiastical power: for such Assemblies, if possible, are extraordinary: and extraordinary Assemblies are not fit Judicatories, to hear and censure ordinary offences, or to administer the ordinary acts of Church-power. *See Mr. Cott. Defence of the way of Congreg. Churches, par. 2. p. 56*

2. If the visible Catholick Church be considered, *as totum integrale*, which is such a whole as ariseth out of the aggregation of all particular Churches (as an Army is made up of all the several Regiments and Troops, or a Kingdom of all the Cities and Counties within it) it cannot be the first subject of the *Keyes, i.e.* of all Church-power. For, 1. particular Churches are the Members, which give the essential causes, whence the integrity of this whole is made up; and there- *See Mr. Hooker's Survey, part 1. ch. 14 & 15.*

therefore, in nature, before it, as the cause is before its effect. 2. Church-Officers, with their Offices, are set ordinarily, by Christs Institution, only in such a Church, where they are called the Chosen; but that is a particular Church; *Act. 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5.* For that choice and calling is the foundation of the relation between Pastors and People, and of the duties both of the Rulers, and of the Ruled, mutually, *Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 2. Heb. 13. 17.* 3. If a Catholick integral Church ariseth from all particular Churches, as Members of it, joyned together; then it must be distinct from them all, as the whole Body is a thing distinct from its several Members; then also there must be some Officer, and Ordinance, and Act belonging to it, which doth not appertain to particular Churches; as there is a General over an Army, besides the Captains and Officers of the several Regiments; and a Supreme Monarch in a Kingdom, besides the Governors in the several Corporations, and Counties: But no such Catholick-Church, distinct from all particular Churches, can be shewen, nor Officers, or acts of it, besides those which are exercised in particular Churches. 4. Diocesan Bishops look at these words, as giving the Keys to them, as the
 Suc-

Successors of the Apostles ; whence they assume the power of Ordination and Jurisdiction, as belonging to them, *jure divi-
no*. A claim, which King James, whether out of his policy (which he called his King-craft) or out of his insight into the Scripture, would not suffer them to pretend, in his time. Nor indeed is there any warrant for it in Scripture, as it hath been abundantly proved by sundry witnesses against that usurpation. We read of Bishops in the New-Testament, but what? Not one Bishop over many Churches, but many Bishops over one Church; not Diocesan, but Congregational Bishops. *Phil. 1. 1.* Those whom *Luke* calls Elders, in *Act. 20. 17.* *Paul* calleth Bishops, in *v. 28.* The Bishops which the Apostles acknowledge to be Christs Ordinance, to continue in the Christian Church, are Congregational Elders, *1 Tim. 3. 1-8.* *Tit. 1. 5, 7.* *1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.* and all the Teaching-Elders are *συνπρεσβύτεροι*, fellow-Elders, coequal in authority, above whom *Paul* acknowledgeth no Rulers in the Church, but rather sets these above all, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* *Euseb. Eccl. hist. l. 6. c. 43.* And, when, after the Apostles time, one of the Pastors was called Bishop, by way of *Cyp. Ep. l. 3. Ep. 10.* eminency, for orders sake; yet, for many years, he did no act of power, but, *1. with* *Ex l. 1. c. 3.* con-
3.

Dr. Cudw.
on the
Postscript
to Galat.

consent of the Presbytery ; 2. with consent, and in the presence, of the People. What is pleaded from *Titus* his ordaining, *Tit. 1. 5.* helps not their cause : for he did it, as an Evangelist, not as a *Diocesan Prelate* ; and the Office of Evangelists, together with the Apostles, ceaseth. The Postscript of the second Epistle to *Timothy*, where he is called, *the first Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians* ; and of that to *Titus*, where he is called, *the first Bishop of the Church of the Cretians*, are Apocryphal (as the rest are) and the first consisteth not with *2 Tim. 4. 5.* where *Timothy* is called an Evangelist, and therefore, not tyed to personal residence, to abide in one place (as Bishops and Pastors are) but the Evangelists were to go from place to place, to set things in order, and confirm the Churches planted by the Apostles. The same may be said of *Titus*. Nor is the Postscript of that Epistle of more credit than the former, where the Scribe saith, it was written from *Nicopolis*. *Hiperius* justly disliketh the ground of that opinion in the Scribe, which, he saith, was from *Tit. 3. 12.* Because *Paul* bade *Titus* come to him to *Nicopolis*, for he determined to winter there : whereas, if he were there at that time, he would have said, I purpose to winter

winter here, not there; as *Beza* noteth.

5. Others conclude from this Text, that the power of the Keys. *i. e.* the power of Ordination and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, is given in *Peter*, to Church-Officers only, especially to Pastors and Teachers. And that such only, or principally, are meant in this Grant, they endeavour to prove by five reasons, especially. We will examine them severally, and briefly.

1. Reas. *Because the Keys are given to Stewards by Office.* 1 Cor. 4. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Isa. 22. 12.]

Ans. 1. The three former Texts speak of the Apostles and Evangelists Office, and in them, of Pastors and Teachers, not of Ruling-Elders. But, I suppose they will not deny the Ruling-Elders to have a Key of Office also. The last Text proveth only, that *the Key* sometimes signifies Office-power given to a Steward, which none deny. But this toucheth not this Text, *Mat. 16.* which means not only Office-Power, but *all Power*, which serves to shut and open the House or City of God; not power of the Steward only, but the power of the Spouse and Wife of this great King, to whom the Lord Christ, as her Husband, being gone into a far Country,

even to Heaven, hath given power to admit into the Family, and reject, (as occasion shall require, and for those ends, to judge also; because such acts require judgment, and to call the Steward to his place, and to put him into it, and to put a Key of Office, by Election, into his hand : and therefore, though all power be not formally in her, yet it cometh originally from her.

Reas. 2. *Because, Christ here giveth the Keys only to those, to whom he giveth Official Warrant and Authority, for the actual exercise thereof, in opening and shutting, binding and loosing, i. e. only to Teachers and Elders.]*

Ans. 1. Though it is true, that Official Warrant and Authority is given only to Teachers & Elders, only Teaching and Ruling Elders have that *formally*; Yet, 2. The power of the Keys is far larger than Office-power, viz. to admit, reject, &c. 3. They have their Office from the Church, and their Office-power, by the Church, originally : Therefore there was power in the Church, before Office-power, which did communicate and convey Office-power to its Officers.

3. Reas. *To bind and loose, are acts of the Office-power of Pastors, Rulers, Feeders by publick and pastoral preaching, which doth not belong to Believers.]*

Ans.

Ans. Binding and loosing, taken in the largest sense, as in this Text, comprehend the exercise of all the acts of the Keys, or Church-power: and these acts are not only by publick and pastoral preaching (for then, the Ruling-Elder should have no Key to bind or loose); but also by Admonitions, Excommunications, Admissions, which issue from a power of judging, not proper to the Pastors only, but common to the People with them. 2. Though the Keys be given to the Church; yet she may not exercise any act proper to Office-Power, without Officers, whom she doth and must call to that end, and submit to them in the due exercise thereof.

4. *Reas. If this place give not warrant and authority to Officers, what warrant have they for their Office-Power?*

Ans. 1. This place gives warrant for the People to choose their Officers, according to Christ's appointment, and the Church doth accordingly call them to that place, and invest them with Office, with voluntary professed subjection to them, in the right exercise of that power of Office; which belongs unto them in the Lord. 2. The several acts of Office-power to be exercised by them, are abundantly,

dantly warranted in other places of Scripture.

5. *Reas. They to whom the Keys are here given; doe authoritatively forgive and retain sins, and their Acts are valid in Heaven: but the Church of Believers, wanting Officers, cannot by any warrant of Scripture, authoritatively forgive and retain sins.]*

Ans. The word, *Authority*, sometimes is taken more generally, for *Power*, sometimes more strictly and properly, for *Ruling and Office-Power*. In the first sense, the Church hath power to forgive judicially, in 2 *Cor.* 2. 10. in reference to their former censure. The Officers forgive authoritatively, in the second sense. We proceed to the last interpretation.

6. Others look at the Keys as given to *Peter* here, in the name of a particular visible Church, indefinitely taken; not of this or that particular definite Church, that all other Churches should receive the Keys from them, or be subject to the power of the Keyes in their hands: For that will not stand with the parity of Churches among themselves: for, *par in parem non habet imperium*. Therefore the Church, here intended, must be taken generally, and indefinitely, as comprehending in it any particular visible Church, one as well

as another, or the general Church as existing its particulars. If it be objected against this, that *Peter* was not a Member of such a Christian Congregation, when Christ spake these words unto him. I answer, It is true : for no such Church was then constituted. No more was there a Presbytery then constituted, when Christ directed *Peter* and the rest, in case of private offence obstinately persisted in, after proceeding in the first and second step, to *tell the Church*, in *Mat. 18.* which yet they hold, but not truly, to be the Presbytery, as we shall evince hereafter, with the assistance of Christ. But, in the mean time, all grant that that Rule serveth to order Members, how to proceed in such cases, when particular Churches should be constituted. And the same reason is of force in this Text also. Some have thought that Christ giveth the Keys in this Text, not to the Church of Believers, of which he spake in the former verse, but to the Elders ; because he altereth the form of his speech : for, having spoken, in the former verse, of the Church, in the third person, saying, *Upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it ;* he saith not, in this verse, *and I will give unto it the Keys,* but

varying the person; he turneth his speech to *Peter*, saying, and *unto thee I will give the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*: but this is a mistake. Here is no changing of person, nor turning of speech, in Christ's giving the promise of the Keys; but, as Christ began, so he continueth his speech to *Peter*, upon occasion of his confession. In v. 17. Christ pronounceth *Peter blessed*, from the cause of his confession. In v. 18. he giveth a promise of reward to *Peters* confession, that, upon this, as upon a Rock, *he will build his Church*, and establish it, as impregnable against *the gates of Hell*. In v. 19. he giveth unto *Peter*, upon occasion of his publick confession in the name of the Church, a promise of *the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Therefore this promise is given to the Church, in *Peter*, in such sort, as, though the use of the Keys be various, according to the variety of callings in the Church, yet the power it self of the Keys, is here originally and primarily committed to the **Church in general*, existing in particular Churches. I might produce sundry Writers, both ancient and modern, of other Countries, and our own, if need required, to confirm this Exposition (yea, of the Authors quoted by Mr. P. not a few consenting herein;) but I shall only mention

*Toti Ecclesia dedit Christus claves, sed ita, ut in Ecclesia certi essent qui claverunt ad salutem Ecclesia, honoremque Dei. Zanc. in præc. 4. quæst. 3. Vid. Park. de Politi. Eccles. l. 3. c. 3.

mention *Cyprian* and *Augustine*, who, in sundry places, speak the same with us. And these two I the rather name, because I find in approved Histories, that sundry Martyrs, being confirmed in this Truth, by their Testimonies, have sealed it with their blood. *Hieronimus Savanarola*, a Godly learned Preacher in *Florence*, a man endued with a Prophetical Spirit, was there burnt, for denying the primacy of the Pope, teaching, that the Keys were given, *Ecclesie toti, non uni Petro*, to the whole Church; and that the Communion should be administred *sub utrâque specie*, and against humane Traditions, and the Popes indulgencies, and the wicked lives of the Cardinals and Priests; and for preaching free Justification by Faith in Christ, and that the Pope is Antichrist. This was about the year, 1499. In our own Land, *John Lambert*, in the year, 1538, was burnt to death, by the sentence of King *Henry the 8th*, himself sitting in judgement upon him, with all his Nobles and Bishops, by the wicked counsel of *Stephen Gardiner*, upon 45 Articles, whereof this was the 43^d Article, Whether he believed the Pope was Christs Vicar, and had power on earth to bind and loose? He denied that the Pope was

Illyr. Cant. Test. verit. cont. Papam. p. 565.

Fox Mart. 17th Reign of Hen. 8th.

Idem, ibid.

Christs Vicar, and affirmed, that the Keys were given to *Peter*, not for himself alone, but in the name of the Church, and proved it out of *Cyprian*, *de simplicitate Clericorum*, and *Aug. de Agone Christiano*. Also Sir *John Borthwick*, a Scottish Knight, in the year 1540, was condemned by the Arch Bishop of *St. Andrews*, then Cardinal of Scotland, and the Popes Legate, with sundry Popish Bishops, upon ten Articles, of which this was the first, touching the Popes Supremacy, grounded upon *Mat. 16. To thee will I give the Keys*: which he, from that place, confuted, affirming that the Keys were given to the Church in *Peter*; which name was given him upon his confession of Christ, in the name of the whole Church; and confirmed his assertion, out of *Cyprian* and *Augustine*. So that this is no new, nor singular exposition of these words, or practice taken up by some few of late. Not new; for *Cyprian* wrote about the year 250 after Christ; and *Augustine*, about the year 410; the last of them about 1200 years since, and the first above 1400 years past. I shall add hereunto, that, before *Cyprian*, *Tertullian*, about the year 200, sheweth, that Church-censures were then performed by one particular Church within it self,

self, and not in any combination of Churches; *Tertull. Apolog. Cap. 39.* Nor singular; for sundry sorts of Writers, in several Ages and Countries, have consented therein. I will not enter into that question, (about which there seems to be some difference in apprehensions between some Godly learned Brethren) Whether the Keys are given to *Peter* under several considerations, as an Apostle, and as an Elder, and as a professing Believer, all being taken joyntly together? or to a single Society, or condition of men, under some special Relation, which share alike in the equality of this Power promised unto them? For in the substance of the matter they agree, 1. That the Keys are promised to *Peter*, in the name of a Congregational-Church. 2. That this power of the Keys cannot be given to one single Society formally, in all the kinds of it; because it requires several sorts of subjects formally different, *viz.* some Ruling, some Ruled, some Teaching, &c. 3. That, til a Congregational-Church be organized, and compleated with all its Officers, it cannot compleatly exercise the Keys committed to it. 4. That, nevertheless, before it be compleated, it hath power of the Keys, and is the first subject of them,
either

either formally, or virtually, whereby all the Ordinances are administred, or administred among them. I shall issue this point into one Doctrinal Conclusion.

6. Concl. The subordinate ordinary Power of acting Church-affairs, in the Order appointed by Jesus Christ, for attainment of the ends of Church-Communion, is given by Christ to a visible Congregation of confederate Believers, as the first and proper subject of it.

In the handling of this point, I shall note somethings, 1. For Explication. 2. Confirmation of it. 3. Draw some Confectaries.

1. For explication of it, I shall endeavour to clear five particulars.

1. What I mean by *Subordinate Power.*] Subordinate Power is that which wholly dependeth on Christs Ordinance and Institution, who is the Supreme and only Monarch and Head of the Church; and therefore his revealed Will must be attended in all Church-Administations, as the only Rule, from which they may not swerve to the right hand, or to the left, for any humane policies, or pretences whatsoever, by adding ought thereto, or taking any thing therefrom. To this Christ limited his Apostles, who were the highest

highest Officers in the Church, *Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20.* And, accordingly, *Paul* strictly charged *Timothy*, and, in him, all the Churches and Church-Officers, *to keep this Commandment, without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14, 15.* They must assume to themselves only that power, which he hath allotted them, and not exercise it any otherwise than he hath allowed them.

2. Why I add *ordinary*, to subordinate.] It is added, to difference that Power, which resideth in the Church for continual use in ordinary dispensations, from that which was in the Apostles for a time, by the gift of Christ. Both Apostolical-Power, and Church-Power agree in this, that they are received immediately from Christ. For, as he said to the Apostles, *whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c. Joh. 20. 23.* So he said to the Church, both here, in *Peter*, and in *Mat. 18. 18. Whatsoever ye shall bind, or loose on earth, &c.* So that, neither did the Apostles receive their Power from the Church, nor doth the Church receive its power from the Apostles, but both immediately from Christ: and therefore, as the Apostles had their Power, before visible Christian-Churches were constituted; so such Churches

ches have and hold their Power, when Apostles cease to be on earth. But herein these two Powers differ; 1. That Apostolical Power was centred in one single Person, and extended it self to the circumference of all Churches. Each Apostle had the Power of the whole Church, and of all the Officers of the Church; when he was absent from the Churches, he could administer Seals and Censures, as if he had the presence and concurrence of the Church: and, if he was present in any Church that wanted Officers, an Apostle had power to execute every Office, for the Church. And this their Power extended it self as much to all Churches, as to any one. *Their Line went out into all the World, Psal. 19.4. with Rom. 10.18. Mat. 28.19.* For as the Father sent Christ the Mediator, with fulness of Soveragin Power; so Christ sent his Apostles with fulness of Ministerial Power, *Joh. 20.21.* But Church-Power is not in one man, but in a Society, and to be exercised variously by several persons in that society, according to variety of callings. *Are all Teachers? 1 Cor. 12.29.* Hence, 2. That was extraordinary, and to last but for a time: but this is ordinary, and to continue to the end. *Rev. 4.1.*

3. What

3. What the Church-Affairs are, and what the acting them imports.] The Church-affairs are the Ordinances of Christ, called here the *Keys*, in a large sense, the word of the Covenant, and the seals of the Covenant, and the Censures. These the Church may be said to act, by opening and shutting. 1. They open the doors of the Church subordinately, when they admit only such, and all such, to fellowship, whom Christ receiveth, *Rom. 14. 1, 3.* 2. The doors of office in the Church they do open in the Church subordinately, when they elect and ordain such unto Offices, as Christ hath prepared and called thereunto, according to the rule in *1 Tim. 3. 1 --- 14.* and then only to such Offices as Christ hath set in his Church: which are only four, *Rev. 4. 6, 7, 8.* For Widows are included in Deacons. These are reduced to two general heads, in *Phil. 1. 1.* and so are their functions, in *Rom. 12. 6, 7.* and yeeld unto them all, and only that power which Christ hath annexed to their Office, and particularly unto Teaching and Ruling Officers, that subjection and honour which the word calls for, *Heb. 13. 17. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.* 3. They shut the Doores of the Church, and binde men from Church-Ordinances, and

and Priviledges; 1. By not admitting those to Church-fellowship, against whom they have just exceptions, *Act. 9. 26.* 2. By judging and censuring scandalous members, whether Brethren or Officers, according to Christs Rules, *Mat. 18. 17, 18.* and *1 Cor. 5.* 3. By holding them under censure, without release, till their repentance be to satisfaction, according to Christ's Rules, *2 Cor. 2. 6, 7.*

4. What *the order is*, wherein Christ will have these Church-affairs to be acted?] The order is this. First, a company of Believers, being satisfied concerning the spiritual state of one another, and their fitness for Church-fellowship, and there-upon confederating together, to walk together in all the Ordinances of Christ, with mutual watchfulness and submission one to another in the Lord, become a Congregational-Church. They have now the essentials of a Church. 2. Being such, they must look out from among themselves for such Officers as Christ hath given to his Church; these they must chuse and ordain, professing their voluntary submission to their Office-Rule, and Authority, in the Lord. Till this be done, they cannot compleatly act all Church-affairs, in due order. Till they have Teaching-
Elders,

Elders, though there be gifted-Brethren among them that may Prophecie, *1 Cor. 14.* yet they have none to give themselves continually to Prayer (according to the necessities and occasions of the Church) and to the Ministry of the Word, *Act. 6. 4.* Such attendance being proper to Officers; *Rom. 12. 7.* Nor, 3. to preach the word with authority, as an Officer must. *Tit. 2. 15.* Nor, 4. to administer the Seals, which Christ hath annexed to the official preaching of the Word, *Mat. 28. 19, 20.* Without Ruling-Elders, who shall call the Church together, as the Apostles did, on speciall weighty occasions, *Act. 6. 2* ? Who shall prepare matters for the Church, 1. By examining Officers or Members, before they be received of the Church, *Rev. 2. 2.* 2. By stating and clearing the question and proofs, and trying, whether matters have been carried according to Rule, privatly, in the first and second step, before any offence be presented to the Church, which was secret at first, according to *Mat. 18. 17.* 3. By directing those that are to give satisfaction to the Church, in case of offence conceiv'd against them, how to carry themselves, according to rule, to remove it, as the Apostles and Elders, being met at the House of
James,

James, did to *Paul*, *Act.* 21. 18. To these heads, other like cases are to be referred. Who shall moderate debates in the Church Assembly, and order speaking and silence in the Church, according to Rules of order; and edification? *1 Cor.* 14. 26, 40. Who shall hold forth light from the Rule, to guide the apprehensions and judgment of the Brethren, in difficult cases? according to *Ezek.* 44. 23, 24. Lastly, who shall dismiss the Church Authoritatively, with a Blessing, in the name of the Lord? *Numb.* 6. 23 -- 26. and *Heb.* 7. 7. And who shall take care of the humane affairs of the Church, if Deacons be not chosen and ordained? This Office-Power the Church indeed hath not *formally* in it self; yet it hath it *virtually*, and *originally*. As the stock of a Tree hath not immediate power to bring forth fruit; yet it hath power to produce branches which do bring forth fruit; so the Church of Believers, though it hath not immediate power to act an Office, in the things proper thereunto, yet it hath power to make such Officers as may perform the same in Christ's order.

5. Why this Power is said to be given to a visible Congregation of confederate Believers, as the first and proper subject
of

6fit?] This expreffion serveth to shew three particulars. 1. That I speak of a Congregational-Church, indefinitely, or the Church in its general nature, as it exists in particular Congregations, to each of which it communicates its whole nature, and with it all its priviledges and power to them all, being species of it, firstly and equally; so that each particular Church hath all Church-Power, that is seated in the general nature of the Church, as compleatly conveyed to it, as any other: as this particular man, *John*, or *Peter*, or *James* hath all the nature of man equally communicated to them, and can put forth the operations of that nature, fully of themselves, and without the help of any other. 2. That this Power is given to the Church to be acted, in Admissions, Elections, and Censures, only by such in whose name *Peter* made this confession, viz. *a Community of Disciples walking in the profession of the Faith, with consent*; that is, to a Society of believing men; for Women, though Believers, are excepted by the Rule, 1 *Tim.* 2. 12-14. 2. *Professing Believers*; therefore Children and distracted persons are not capable of this power, being unfit to judge, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. and so are they that are Deaf and

H

Dumb:

Dumb. 3. Such as *walk in the profession of the Faith, with consent*. Therefore such as are under publick censure for scandals in Life or Doctrine, are disabled, as having, for the time, lost their priviledge and power. Lastly, if the Church it self be generally corrupted or divided among themselves, as it were into two equal parts, it cannot act this power, nor claim an interest in this promise, which is given to a Church assembly in Christs Name, with competent agreement among themselves. *Mat. 18. 17, 18, 19, 20.*

3. That this Power is given to such a Church, not only objectively for their good, but subjectively and firstly, so that the Church is the first recipient subject of it. For Officers are given to the Church, *Ephes. 4. 8, 11.* not as meer adjuncts are given to a subject, but as integral parts, for compleating the integrity and perfection of the whole body of the Church: and, if they be so given to the Church, the Church is the recipient subject of them: and though the Church cannot by it self exercise the Teaching and Ruling-Elders Office; yet they may by their Officers; as the body, though it cannot see by it self, yet it may by the eyes which are given to it for that end.

2. The Confirmation, or proof, that such a Church is the first and proper subject of this power; shall be double. 1. By Scripture. 2. By Reasons.

1. By Scripture, it may be proved from sundry Texts. 1. This in hand clearly

confirmeth it, if that good ancient rule of expounding Scripture be received,

Dictorum intelligentia ex causis dictorum sumenda est. For Christ's question to the

Disciples, which was the cause of *Peter's* confession here, was only concerning the

Faith common to the Church. *Whom say ye that I am?* Hereupon *Peter*, in the name

of the Disciples, made this confession of Faith. Christ testified his approbation of

it, by calling him *Peter*, not so much in respect of his Office, as of his Faith thus

publickly professed, whence also visible Believers are called *lively stones*, 1 Pet. 2.

4, 5. and Christ added to this praise of *Peter* a twofold promise. 1. Of edifying

and stablishing the Church, *upon this Rock*.

2. Of affording it sufficient means for the attainment of those ends, *viz. the*

Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. Where the Kingdom of Heaven, or visible Church

of Christ on earth, is compared to a City, or House, the Door or Gate whereof is

Christ; the Keys are all instituted means,

Quia
Christus
Petra, Pe-
trus popu-
lus Chri-
stianus.
August. in
Matth. de
verbis Do-
mini, Ser.
13.

whereby an entrance into Christ and his Kingdom, visibly, is opened and shut, the subordinate power whereof is here given to the Church immediately.

The second Text is in *Mat. 18. 17, 18.* *Tell the Church, & if he hear not the Church, let him be as an Heathen and a Publican. For what you shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c.* This cannot be meant of Elders assembling together, and acting apart from the Brethren. For no such assembly is called the Church, in the New Testament, much less is this power given to them: for, in case of scandal given by them, they are under the power of the whole Church, as well as other Members, to be censured by them, though, when they keep the Rule, they are as Elders, Rulers in the Church. It must therefore be meant of a Congregational Church. The third Text is in *1 Cor. 5.* where *Paul* exhorted the Church at *Corinth*, to exercise this their power, which he calls *the power of the Lord Jesus*, *v. 4.* whereby they were *to deliver unto Satan* that incestuous person; *v. 5.* and were to purge out the old leaven; *v. 7.* and were to judge those that are within; *v. 12.* and *to put away that wicked person from among them*; *v. 13.* and this *Paul* calls a punishment

ment inflicted by many, 2 Cor. 2. 6. Thus he establisheth their power to bind, and teacheth them how to use it; and, in like manner, he exhorteth them, upon the mans repentance, to turn the Key, and to open the Door of Christian liberties to him, and to loose him from the former censure, by forgiving him, in a legal or judicial sense, 2 Cor. 2. 7, 10. And that this Church at Corinth was a meer Congregational-Church, it may be evinced from hence, that the whole Church was no larger, then was wont to meet together in one place, 1 Cor. 14. 23. for the ordinary worship of God.

2. By Reasons.

1. Because in such a Congregational-Church are all the causes of this power.

1. Efficient; the Institution and Ordinance of Christ, who delegateth this subordinate power, to whom it pleaseth him, by his own appointment.

2. The material cause; visible Believers.

3. The formal cause; Covenanting together to walk in all the Ordinances of Christ, and to submit mutually one to another in the Lord; to be reclaimed, if they err from the rules; or to be censured by the power of the whole, if they be found obstinate.

2. Because there is no former subject of this power, from whence a Congregational-Church might deriye it, but it is communicated, by means of the Church, to all that partake of it, and it remaineth in the Church, when others are removed. They choose their own Elders: therefore they had this power virtually in them before they had Elders, and so could not derive it from them. 2. All particular Churches are of equal power within themselves, not one of them subordinate to another. Therefore they derive it not from other particular Churches. 3. Synods, both lesser and larger, are made up of the Elders and Messengers sent from particular Churches, and have their being from them; nor do they send them to them, to borrow any Church-power, but only light from them; as the Church at *Antioch* did from the Church at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 15. Therefore they derive no Church-power from them. Again, when the Elders of particular Churches are dead, or censured, or rejected by the power of the whole for obstinacy in scandalous evils, the Church still retaineth its power to choose others; as a Corporation hath its full power still, though the Magistrates be dead, or cast out.

out. The same holds in Churches in Islands, by their own confession, when they cannot have the help of Synods. Thus we prove Fire to be the first subject of heat, because, if it be in other things, as in Water, or Wood; it is there by the means of Fire, and, when they are removed, yet still it remains in Fire. The like reason holds in this, as you see, to prove such a Church, as this of which we speak, to be the first subject of Church-Power, or of the Keys.

3. Because all the acts done immediatly by the Church, in opening and shutting, in binding and loosing, flow from this power of the Keys given them by Christ, and hold it forth.

1. *Their admitting Members is an act of this Power*, and holds it forth: for, till the Brethren be satisfied, and approve ones fitness, he cannot be received into their fellowship; *Act. 9. 26.* and *10. 47.*

2. *Their choosing Officers is an act of this Power*, which the Apostles would not violate, in adding Deacons, *Act. 6. 3, 5.* and Ruling-Elders to the Church, *Act. 14. 23.* and the same holds much more concerning Pastors and Teachers. This power *Cyprian* acknowledged to be in the

* Plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis & Deum metuens, ipsa maxime habet potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi.

Quod & ipsum videmus de Divina

authoritate descendere. *Cypr. l. 1. ep. 4.*

Ubi est vera Ecclesia, ibi esse necesse est jus eligendi, et ordinandi Ministros.

Melanct. de potest. Episcop. Arg. 2.

* People principally, to accept or refuse Ministers, as they judged them worthy or unworthy.

3. *Their Ordination of Officers, by deputing some chosen out of their own Body thereunto (in the want of Officers) is an act of this Power of the Keys residing in them.*

For, though the Offices of Elders in general, and the Authority of their Office, as they are Rulers, is from Christ immediately; yet the investing of this or that elect person with this Office & Authority,

in relation to this or that Church, by application of it to him in particular, rather than to another, this is by the Church.

4. *Their Expostulating with any Member, in case of supposed offence, is an act of this Power, whereunto Peter submitted, though an Apostle, in the Church at Jerusalem. Act. 11. 2, 3, 4.*

5. *Their publick Admonishing offenders, is an act of this Power, whether they be offending Brethren, or offending Officers, Mat. 18. 18. Col. 4. 17. Let him hear the Church, &c. Say to Archippus, Fulfil, &c.*

6. *Their Excommunicating obstinate and scandalous sinners, whether a Brother, Mat. 18. 18. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, or an Officer, Gal. 5. 12.*

is an act of this power in the Church.

7. Their receiving again, or releasing from censure, those that have been under censure, upon their repentance, according to the Rule, 2 Cor. 2. 7, 10. is an act of this power. This

also Cyprian acknowledged to be in the *People, or fraternity, who, though they gladly received such as returned with repentance, yet he could hardly persuade them, yea, extort it from them, to receive such, in whom pride and obstinacy appeared, and he justified them herein, blaming himself for too much facility.

*Vix plebi
persuadeo,
imò extor-
queo, ut
tales pati-
antur ad-
mitti. Et
justior fa-
ctus est
fraternita-

tis dolor, ex eo, quod unus atque alius, obnitente plebe & contradicente, mea tamen facilitate suscepti, priores extiterunt, quam prius fuerant, nec fidem poenitentiae servare potuerunt, quia nec cum verâ poenitentia venerant. *Cypr. l. i. ep. 3.*

1. Corollarie.

Then the Church is before its Officers, that is, it is a true Church, essentially, and hath all Church-Power, either formally, or virtually, before it hath Officers, and when the Officers are removed from it, by Death or Censure. For, 1. as a man is a true man, who is a *living creature endued with a reasonable soul*, because the definition of a man agreeth to him, though he wanteth some bodily Members; so a Church is a true Church, which consists of a *Society of visible Believers confederated together*

together in one Congregation, to walk together in all the Ordinances of Christ, with mutual submission one to another, in the Lord; because the definition of a Church agreeth to it, though it wants Officers. 2. Such a Church can call their Officers, and thereby make them Officers to themselves: Therefore it must be before them, as the cause is before its effect. A Corporation hath its being and power of a Corporation within it self, before it hath Magistrates; because it can chuse Magistrates, and, when they are dead, or put out, can put others into their stead and place. So it is with the Church.

2. Corollary.

Then though the Church hath its essential being and power, without Officers; yet it is defective, two wayes. 1. In respect of Members, it hath not its compleat integrity of Members, without them. *Bartimeus* was a true man, without his eyes, but not perfect, with the integrity of his parts and members: so is the Church defective and maimed without Officers. 2. As it is defective in its members, so also, in its operations, if it want Officers. For some Ordinances cannot be at all administred in the Churches, without Pastors or Teachers, as the outward

ward Seals, or Sacraments, which are annexed, by the Ordinance of Christ, to the Word of the Covenant, and the administration of them is by him limited unto Preachers of the Word by Office, *Mat. 28. 19.* and some acts of Rule, as, in ordering speech in publick, in Church-debates, according to rules of order and edification, and the like, cannot be done without Ruling-Elders. The same may be said of Official watching, to prevent or remove private disorders in conversation among the Members. 3. Some cannot be so done by others, as by Officers. 1. Not with that attendance to them, as the need and good of the Church requireth. *He that bath an Office is bound to wait on it, Rom. 12. 7. to give himself to the duties of it continually, Act. 6. 4. to be in it, 1 Tim. 4. 15.* and therefore must be freed by the Church from other distracting cares, which would disable him to it, *1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.* 2. Not with Authority, which belongeth to Ruling Officers in the Church, as in preaching the Word with Authority, *Heb. 13. 17.* so in other acts, which be properly Official and Authoritative. Hence ariseth a difference between Officers and private Members, in their several manner of acting in things common

mon to both. A Church wanting Officers, may appoint some of their Members to declare the mind of the Church, touching the admission of such into the fellowship of the Covenant, and Membership with the Church, in whose fitness thereunto the Church is satisfied; and in ordaining Officers, chosen by the Church, by imposition of hands and Prayer; and in gathering the suffrages of the fraternity; and in declaring the judgment of the Church in Censures: but these things they do, only at the appointment of the Church, *pro hac vel illa vice*. The same things are done by Teaching and Ruling-Elders in another manner, *viz.* by virtue of their Office, without particular leave of the Church: for, it belongs to them, as Officers, to attend unto their Work, not only to hold forth the Covenant, and to receive into Fellowship, in the name of the Church, those whom the Church approveth, but also to try the fitness of those that offer themselves unto Fellowship, before they propound them to the Church. The same holds in Officers to be called; and when the Church hath chosen them, and agreed to ordain them, the Eldership impose hands upon them, in the presence of the Church, by virtue of their Office.

When

When offences are brought to the Church in the third step, as the Elders do propound the case, so it must first be notified to them, that they may try whether the Rule hath been attended in the two former steps, and that they may clear all difficulties, and then propound the case, when it is found to be fit for publick cognizance, according to Rule. And being so, if they neglect to bring it to the Church, or assume any undue power to themselves, they that are offended may complain to the Church; and, as need may require, they are to hold forth light from Scripture, to guide the Church in judging: and, in the close, to propound the sentence (wherein the Church consenteth, and they concur with them) authoritatively.

3. Corollary.

Then the proper acts of Church-power, and of ordinary Office-power, are limited, by the Ordinance of Christ, to be put forth by the Church, and Officers respectively, within that Body, or particular Congregation, to which they have a particular memberly or official Relation. The members of one Church cannot act in admitting the Members, choosing the Officers, nor censuring Offenders of another Church. Nor may the Officers of one Church,

Church, administer the Seals, or ordain Officers, or perform other proper Acts of official Authority, out of their own body, in another Church. The Church may, by communion of Churches, upon orderly recommendation, receive the members of other Churches unto fellowship of such Ordinances, as are for the comfort and strengthening of the Saints, as the Seals are, and the Officers may administer them to such, being accepted by the body: for we have a warrant for so much, from the Rule, *Rom. 16. 1. 3 Joh. 9.* but not to act in judgement. For, the Church hath this priviledge proper to be judged by, and to judg, only those that are within, *1 Cor. 5. 12.* whereas I alledged this Text against Mr. Paget, to prove, that Church-Ordinances belong only to the Members of some particular Church, Mr. Rutterf. meeting with that expressi-
 on, saith, Mr. D. will have Pastors so far strangers to all Congregations, save their own, that (he saith) other Churches are without, and have nothing to do to judge them, and alledgeth for this, *1 Cor. 5. 12.* But by those that are without, Paul meaneth, not those that were not of the Congregation, but he meaneth Infidels and Heathen, as in other Scrip-
 tures.

tures. For *Paul* judged and excommunicated *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, 1 *Tim.* 1.20. who were without the Church at *Corinth.*] Had Mr. *Rutt.* been pleased to cast his eye upon my own defence of that passage, printed sundry years before he put pen to paper in these disputes about Church affairs, he might have found that written by me, touching the sense, and my application of that Text, which might have prevented his exagitating that matter. Nor doth he with any congruity argue from *Paul's* Excommunicating *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, who, he saith, were without the Church at *Corinth*, to prove that Pastors have any thing to do, to judge judicially, or excommunicate the members of other Congregations. For *Paul* was an Apostle, an extraordinary Officer, had an illimited commission, and a fulness of delegated power both in every Church, and to administer Church-Ordinances, without the fellowship of a particular Church, when it could not be had; and to execute all Offices in any Church, where Officers were wanting: But Pastors are ordinary Officers, have a limited commission, to do only the acts of the Pastoral Office, and those only to that particular Church, by which they are called unto

Office.

In my A-
polog. Re-
ply, pag.
312, 313.

Office; *Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 2.* Therefore, though *Paul* might excommunicate one that was not of that particular Church at *Corinth*, yet the Pastor to the Church at *Corinth* might not. Yet *Paul* could not excommunicate one that was no member of any Church, but without, as Infidels and Heathen are: For that implies a contradiction. To conclude. The Apostle doth so appropriate Church-judgment, to those that are within that particular Church; *1 Cor. 5. 12. Ye judge them that are within*; that he exempts from it in a due proportion, all that are not members of that Congregation; though there are degrees of being without, some being totally without all Church-communion, as Infidels and Heathen: others, though in Church-communion else-where, yet not in communion of membership of that Church, to whom he wrote to *put away from them*; not one that was a member of another Church, but him that was a member of that Church. And, in this sense, *Mr. Rutt. saith, Hymeneus and Alexander were without the Church at Corinth*, though members of some other Church: for which cause, the Church at *Corinth* could not excommunicate them, yet *Paul* might, and did, by his Apostolical Power. Thus,
by

by his own confession, some are without a particular Church, who yet are not *Heathen* or *Infidels*. To conclude, one may be said to be without this or that particular Church, two ways. 1. Simply and absolutely; so, *Infidels* and *Heathen* that are of no Church. 2. Comparatively, so the Members of other Churches, compared with those that are of this Body.

4. Corollary.

Then Churches gathered, and Officers ordained, in these days, without Apostles, are true Churches, and true Church-Officers, according to Christ; and Churches thus Organized, according to the Rules of the Word, are true, and intire Churches, and the first subject of all Church-power, as well as those Primitive Churches planted by the Apostles. For the concurrence of the Apostles is not put into this Charter, whereof we speak, as a conditional Clause; which might not have been omitted, if Christ had intended, that it should be always necessary. He doth not say, upon this Rock my Apostles shall build my Church, and to my Church built by them I will give the Keys of the Kingdom; but, upon this Rock I will build my Church (*viz.* by such Instruments as Christ will raise,

and use, and bless in that work, in every Age;) and to this Church, thus built, he gives the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. *Object.* But Christ gave the Commission of gathering Churches to his Apostles, in *Matth.* 28. 18, 19. And, *when he ascended up on high, he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ, Ephes.* 4. 8, 11, 12. *Answer.* Those and the like Texts of Scripture do indeed shew, that God used Apostles principally in this work, but not only: For as to Teach and Baptize is common to other Teaching-Officers, as well as Apostles; so the gathering of Churches, by making men Disciples of Christ, was done by others, besides Apostles, even in the Apostles days, *Act.* 11. 20, 21. The dispersed Disciples planted the Church at *Antioch*, the Members whereof were first called Christians, a Church whose planting *Barnabas* approved, *ver.* 23. 2. They shew, that God would use Apostles herein, for a time, but not alwayes; which I prove, 1. From the proper work committed, to them, which was to make the first Models and Patterns of planting and

gathering Churches, which ordinary Instruments are bound to attend in the gathering and constituting of Churches, 1 Cor. 3. 6, 10. and, in that sense, their work continues to the end of the World, though their manner of working. viz. from an immediate Call, Inspiration, and Infallible assistance, proper to Apostles, in making those Patterns, was extraordinary, and ended with their Office, in the first Age, since when, there never have been Apostles in the World. For, though *Matthias* succeeded in the place of *Judas*, by Gods Election, *Act. 1. 26.* yet after *James* was beheaded, no Apostle was chosen to succeed him, though the Apostles lived long after. 2. The Apostle *John*, who lived longest of the Apostles, describeth, by Revelation from Christ, all the Officers that should be, by Gods Ordinance, in Christian Churches, after that Age, under four sorts of living Creatures, which note the four sorts of ordinary Officers to continue in the Church after that Age, viz. Pastors, Teachers, Ruling-Elders, and Deacons, *Revel. 4. 1, 6, 7.*

Vers. 19. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven: Whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.

THese words hold forth the Ratification of Christ's grant of the Keys unto a Congregational-Church, with the chieftie of power, under Christ, to manage the same within themselves, for the attainment of the ends of Church-Communion; And that this is spoken to *Peter*, in the name of such a Church, and, that Christ intended to establish, by this promise, the compleat exercise of this power in such a Church, being compleated with all its Officers, is clear from *Matth. 18.18.* where the same promise is given, by name to such a Church. The words therefore, in summe, hold forth a grant from Christ to his Church of an indispensable power of Church-censures, within themselves: which may be thus evinced. The censure that is established in Heaven cannot be dispensed with, nor reversed by any power on Earth: But the censure, that is administered by a Congregational-Church, is established in Heaven: Therefore it cannot be dispensed withall, nor reversed by any
pow-

power on Earth. The Proposition, a man would think might pass without opposition, but I find this Objection made against it. *Obj.* The sentence of an inferiour Judge or Court proceeding rightly, is established in Heaven; yet we may appeal from it; Why will not the same hold in Church-censures also? *Ans.* 1. Because the promise of binding in Heaven, is not given by Christ to the censures of Civil Courts: For it is not a Civil, but a Spiritual binding that is here meant. 2. Because there is not *par ratio* between them. The reason why appeals may be made from the sentence of inferiour Civil Courts and Judges, is, because there is a Supreme Court *in being*, to which the appeal may be brought, and there prosecuted, and thereby determined (as the inferiour Courts in *Israel* stood under the highest Synedrion;) but there is no such Supreme Court ordained by Christ over particular Churches. The Assumption, That the censure that is administered by a Congregational-Church is established in Heaven, is expressly in the Text, as it hath been expounded. True, say some, what a particular Church binds on Earth, *clave non errante*, is bound in Heaven; but the Church may err in Judgement, there-

fore appeal may be made, and then their binding power is gone. *Ans.* 1. If possibility of erring in Judgment be a warrantable ground of appealing from particular Churches ; then the appeal must be made to such a Tribunal and Judge, as cannot err, which is to be found only in Heaven. 2. On this ground, the universal Church represented in a general Council (much more, inferiour *Synods* and *Classes*) should not have power to bind, without appeals. For a general Council may err, and hath erred ; not seldom, but often ; not in small matters only, but in those of the greatest moment ; yea they may be as much inclined to err, as particular Churches : For the greatest part of visible Churches in the World are for the most part corrupt. If it be said, There are more eyes, & *plus vident oculi quam oculus* ? I answer ; True, *ceteris paribus*, viz. if they are equally near the mark ; but their sight is hindred more than particular Churches are in their proper concernments, as they are further from the mark, in such cases, than particular Churches. And if particular Churches have not full power of Excommunication, because they may err, be corrupt, be partial, be divided ; upon the same ground,

ground, neither Classical, National, nor Oecumenical Assemblies have any such power; for they may err, be corrupt, be partial, be divided also. 3. Christ, who well knew what is in man, and what is best for the good of his people, hath given unto his particular Churches, notwithstanding their possibility of erring, an indispensable power of judgment, in their own matters, within themselves. The Doctrinal Conclusion to be insisted upon, is this:

A Congregational Church of Christ, *7. Conclu.*
being compleated with Officers, hath, by the gift of Christ, within it self, compleat subordinate Church-power in all Church-affairs proper to it self. When I say,
1. It hath compleat, or sufficient Church-power] Thereby I mean, 1. That it needeth not the influence of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of any other Church or Churches, or Classes, or Synods, to supply unto it any power that it wanteth, in its own matters; and 2. That it standeth not in subjection under any other Superior Ecclesiastical Judicatory, so as that thereby the judicial Acts of a particular Church may be hindered, or made void. In a word, *Potestas uniuscujusq; particularis Ecclesie, in re propria, summa est.* The

power of such a Church is Chief, in things proper to it self. 2. I add, that *this chief-ty of power*, in a particular Church, is *sub-ordinate*] To shew, that the absolute Supremacy of power is in Christ; that which the Church hath, is only delegated from Christ. When a particular Church is compleated with all its Officers, the Government of it, in respect of Christ the Head, is perfectly Monarchical; in respect of the Elders, acting their Authority, or Office-power, it is Aristocratical; and in respect of the Fraternity, acting its Church-power in Judgment, it is Democratical; and, in the concurrence of all the Members, both Officers and Brethren, acting according to their several interests, it is *Aristocratico-Democratical*; above which, Christ hath not set any higher Ecclesiastical Judicatory on Earth, subjecting particular Churches thereunto, *in re propria*. A clear proof of such power, as that which hath been described, you may see in the Church at *Corinth* excommunicating that incestuous person, in 1 *Cor.* 5. 1—5. Say not, as some do, That was not an act of Judicial power in that Church, but of subjection to the Apostle who decreed it, and judged him before, and committed no more to the Church,
but

but the publishing of the sentence ; for, <sup>Εγω απο-
 though *Paul*, as an Apostle, judged that <sup>ηδη κειμε-
 he should be excommunicated, yet he so <sup>να, 1 Cor.
 judged only dogmatically, by teaching 5.3.
 the Church what they ought to do in
 that case, not judicially, by his own sen-
 tence, delivering him to Sathan ; and ac-
 cordingly *the Church cast him out*, by their
 own sufficiency of Church-power, with-
 in themselves, though in a way of sub-
 jection to the command of Christ deli-
 vered by *Paul*. For, 1. They *deliveredd
 him to Satan, in the Name, and with the
 Power of the Lord Jesus*, v. 4. and that is
 the highest Power. 2. The end and use
 of it was, *for the destruction of the flesh*,
*that his Spirit might be saved in the day of
 the Lord Jesus*, v. 5. which argueth, that
 it proceedeth from a power of binding in
 Heaven, as well as on Earth. 3. When
 God blessed this sentence, by making it
 effectual to work Repentance in him, *Paul*
 exhorteth the whole Church to release and
 forgive him, 2 Cor. 2. 6---10. and doth
 not claim the Power over them of a Su-
 perior Judge, to absolve him by his own
 sentence, without them : Nor did he
 write to the Elders of sundry Churches,
 but only to that particular Church, both
 Elders and Brethren, and thereby ac-
 know-</sup></sup></sup>

knowledgeth the Power of Ecclesiastical Judgment to be so fully in them, that, As their not putting it into act retarded the sentence before, and their putting of it into act was a Judicial Act in them all, *ye judge them that are within*, 1 Cor. 5. 12. So, their forgiving him would be a Legal and Judicial acquitting him from that sentence, 2 Cor. 2. This Church is our pattern, and its practice in this is pre-ferential to all particular Churches of Christ.

1. *Reas.*

From the guilt which lyeth upon every such Church, when any scandal given by their Members remaineth uncensured and unremoved. Therefore *Paul* applyed this Reproof to the whole Church, Brethren as well as Officers, for their slowness to excommunicate that man, 1 Cor. 5. 2. And in like manner, Christ reproveth the Angel, and Church, both of *Pergamus*, Rev. 2. 14, 15. and of *Thyatira*, ver. 20. If these Churches had not sufficient power within themselves to purge out such Leaven, why are they blamed for tolerating the same? And why are not other Churches, or the Classes, blamed for neglect of exercising their power of Ecclesiastical Judicature over them, if they stood under any such? And what the Spirit speaketh to them,

them, he saith to other Churches also, to beware of the like Remissness. Which Admonition all particular Churches are bound to attend; lest else the gates of Hell prevail against them, through their neglect of exercising that power which Christ hath given them, severally, and respectively, to preserve their Members and whole fellowship in Spiritual purity and safety, *Heb. 12. 15.*

From the Analogy and agreement that 2. *Reas.*
 is between the Spiritual power of a Congregational Church of Christ, and the civil power of the most free and perfect Cities, which *Thucydides* saith have three priviledges, viz. to use, 1. Their own Laws. 2. Magistrates. 3. Judgments, (whence he calls every such City, *ἀντίνομον, ἀποτελῆ*) other Cities were not accounted intire and perfect Cities of themselves, but less worthy Members of those great and perfect Cities, under whose Jurisdiction they were. The *summa potestas* of *jure bel* *Grot. de*
 those great and perfect Cities, is that, *cujus pae. l. i. c.*
actus alterius juri non subsunt, ita ut alteri- 3. P. 4. 5. 7.
us voluntatis humane arbitrio irriti possunt reddi. Now every particular Church of Christ, being compleated with its Officers, is a most perfect and free City, the City of God, *Psal. 48. 1.* The City of the great King,
 ver.

ver. 2. the visible Kingdom of *the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, 1 Tim. 6. 15. and therefore it must necessarily have sufficient and compleat power within it self to manage the Keys, without dependence on Classes, &c. in its own concerns. Yet herein is a difference between such perfect Cities and the Churches of Christ, That such Cities may part with their Liberty, in some cases, as being overmatched by a Potent Enemy. In this case, the *Collatives* yielded up themselves, and their City and Liberties to *Tarquinius Priscus* King of the *Romans*; or when they are in extream danger by an Enemy, whom they would not have to rule over them, and cannot defend themselves by any other means, which was the case of *Campani* distressed by the *Samnites*, which forced them to yield up themselves, and all they had, with all their Liberties, unto the *Romans*; which when they had done, they were said to be *facti alienæ potestatis*. Yet it was presupposed that they had power in themselves thus to do, as appears by that question, *Estne populus Collatinus in suâ potestate*? But Churches have not power to alienate from themselves their Church-Liberties, which Christ hath purchased for

Liv. Dec.

1.1.1.

Idem. Ibid.

l. 7.

Populum

Campa-

num, ur-

bemq; de-

lubra De-

um, divi-

na, huma-

naq; omnia

in vestra,

P. C. ditio-

em dedi-

mus.

for them with his Blood, and commanded them to *stand fast* in them, *Gal. 5. 1.* and, to whom they must give an account, how they have kept and managed the same, *Luke 16. 2.*

From the Concession of those that oppose this Truth, “Mr. Pag. acknowledgeth that if a particular Church of God should sojourn among the *Indians*, or among *Hereticks*, where it could not obtain fellowship with other Churches out of it self: Or, if by violence, or other unavoidable inconveniences, any Church should be hindred from enjoying this benefit of combination with other Churches in Classcal Government, yet notwithstanding this want, this Church should subsist still, and be reputed a true Church.] Others say the same of a Church in an Island, and add, that, in such cases a single Congregation must not be denied intireness of Jurisdiction. “Mr. Rutterf. adds, that when Churches cannot enjoy the society of neighbouring Churches with that comfort and conveniency as their occasions may require, among them Ordination, and so Excommunication, may be performed by the Congregation.] From this Concession it will follow, that,

3. *Reas.*
The power of *Class-*
ses, and
Syn.p. 33.
ad Calcem;

Mr. Herle
Indep. 1.

1. A Congregational Church of Christ, *quà talis*, hath a lawful right in an intireness of Church-Government, within it self, by the gift of Christ, yea, that the Church-power, Natively and Naturally, lyes in the Congregation, for such cases are ordinary; and the first Synod, which is looked at as presidential to all Synods, was a concurrence of two Churches, which were two hundred miles distant.

2. The other Churches, or Classes, or Synods, have no right to take away this power from it. *For none may put asunder what God hath joyned*, as well in this case, as in that noted in *Mat. 19.7.* God hath joyned intireness of Jurisdiction, *in re propria*, to a particular Church, who then shall sunder it from such a Church, to place it in Classes, as Superior Judicatories, where God never put it?

3. If the first Church in a Continent had this compleat power within it self, before other Churches were gathered, and the rising up of other Churches there long after, should deprive them of it, by setting up a Classis, as a Superior Judicatory, over them; then the neighbourhood of Churches should not be a benefit, but a disadvantage to them, and would
give

give them cause to complain unto God,
 Thou hast multiplyed the Nation, but not
 increased our joy. "But they hold, that
 "every Church is bound to seek this de-
 "pendency, and union with other Chur-
 "ches, as God shall give opportunity
 "and means, and cannot, without sin,
 "neglect the same. And, lest we should
 "think it but a matter Arbitrary, at best;
 "they tell us, it is of the same necessity,
 "for a Church to combine unto Classes,
 "and Synods, for their Spiritual Govern-
 "ment, if they have opportunity, as to
 "joyn a mans self, as a Member, to a par-
 "ticular Church, if he hath means and
 "opportunity to do it; and conclude, all
 "that neglect to do it, sin against the
 "Communion of Saints, and walk not
 "as becometh the Body of Christ, *Rom.*
 "12. 5. *1 Cor.* 12. 15. *Ephes.* 4. 16.

Pow. of
Class. &
Syn.p. 33.
Idem.p 34.

Ans^r. 1. The Proofs alleadged do
 shew, that the Communion of Saints
 ought to be preserved and exercised in
 Church-Communion by Believers, joyn-
 ing to a particular Congregation, and
 walking in a Memberlike affection and
 fellowship with their Brethren, unto
 mutual edification; but they speak no-
 thing for the subjection of particular
 Churches to Classes and Synods, in re-

pro-

propria, but rather intimate the contrary: For the Apostle, by comparing a Congregational-Church compleated with its Officers, unto the Body of a man intire in all its Members, sheweth, that as the Body of a man, being intire and sound, hath compleat power within it self, for all bodily actions; so a particular Church, being organized, and governed by Christ, *the Head, from whom the whole Body fitly joyned and compacted together, by Joints of supply, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love,* Ephes. 4. 15, 16. without the influence of any Jurisdiction out of it self, to supply a Superior Church-power, which was wanting in this Body of Christ, a Congregational-Church; and as the Body Natural, being sound and of a good constitution, hath sufficient ability in it self, to purge out of it self Malignant Humors; so such a Church hath sufficient power in it self, to cast out vicious and hurtful Members, without the intervention of Classial Jurisdiction over them.

2. It is a sin against the second Commandment, in such, as having means and opportunity, neglect to joyn, as Members,

bers in a particular Congregation, because it is God's Ordinance, and revealed Will, 2 Cor. 8. 5. But Classical Jurisdiction over particular Churches, and their subjection thereunto, is no Ordinance of Christ, and therefore it is so far from being necessary, that it is not lawful; but against the second Commandment, which forbiddeth mens inventions in God's worship, that it may establish only God's Ordinances therein. Others argue thus: 'As, ' though a Town or Family, being alone, ' may govern, as a compleat Body; yet, ' when it stands in a Common-wealth, it ' may not be so independent, but must submit to Combinations: So, though when ' a particular Congregation is alone, it ' may govern as compleat, yet not so, ' when it is among other Churches.

Ans. 1. There is not a like reason of Churches, and of Towns or Families in this respect. For civil Societies are more left to Rules of Humane prudence, by the great Rule of the World, than Churches are. Therefore civil Societies may be of several constitutions, have different Laws and Priviledges, and admit various forms of Government; provided that they be not against Moral Rules, and the good of the People. But in this Spi-

ritual Kingdom of Christ, men may not alter the kind or Form of Church, which Christ hath Instituted, but must preserve inviolate the Laws, Administrations, Priviledges, and Church-Government ordained by him, without Addition, Diminution, or alteration. Hence a particular Church may not alienate from it self, in whole, or part, any Right, Power or Priviledge given it by Christ.

2. If such a Town or Family hath compleat power and Officers within it self, it is not bound to submit to such Combinations in a Commonwealth, except it be under a Superiour Power that can command the same. *Abraham*, having a compleat Family, was not bound to combine with the Governments he dwelt amongst, nor did he; though he joyned in a League of amity, and for mutual help, with *Aner*, *Eschol*, and *Mamre*, yet not to submit to their Government: So neither is a particular Organical Church bound to submit to such Clasical Combinations, till it can be proved by Scripture, that a Superior Power of other Churches can command the same.

3. Though severall Families, not having compleat Government within themselves

selves , must combine in a Commonwealth, yet not to yield up their Family-Government over their Wives, Children, and Servants, respectively, to rule them in common with other Masters of Families. Much less may several Congregational-Churches give up the Government of themselves to Pastors of sundry Churches, combined in a Classis , to govern them in their proper Affairs, such as Admission of Members, Election and Ordination of Officers, Administration of Seals and Censures.

I. *Corollary.*

Then the censure of Excommunication is not a light matter, but to be looked at, as very weighty and formidable. You see,

1. That it is the Sovereign Remedy prescribe by Christ against the many Diseases, whereunto the Body is subject ; the great preservative of the Churches peace, and safety against the gates of Hell.

2. That it is such a Power given by Christ to his Church, as proveth Church-Societies to be the visible Suburbs of Heaven , yea, the Kingdom of Heaven begun on Earth , seeing such an Heavenly Power is committed to them. This is a greater work than *Elijah* did , when he

shut up Heaven, that it rained not, *Jam.* 5. 17. For that was but an outward and temporal Judgment, for three years and six moneths: But this is Spiritual, and for ever, upon impenitent persons. It is greater than Earthly Kings and Magistrates can do; they can bind a Malefactor hand and foot, and deliver him to the Jaylor, and sentence him to banishment out of their Dominions: but this Censure binds the Soul and Conscience, delivers them to Satan, and excludes obstinate impenitent sinners from the Kingdom of God; that when this Censure is applied by the Church according to Scripture-Rules, Jesus Christ *is with them*, to ratifie his Censure according to this Promise, *What you shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven*; and to bless it to the attainment of its end, *the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved*. This is a singular Priviledge of Church-Members. If they that are out of Church-fellowship, bless themselves in their Liberty, because they cannot be touched with Church-censures, they shew their extream folly therein; for they are left to the Sword of the Magistrate, or to the immediate judgment of God, as forlorn Creatures, excluded from Spiritual helps
 suitable

suitable to their needs. They are as
Sheep whom no man taketh up, or careth
 for, in a Spiritual way, *Isa. 3. 13, 14.* It is
 therefore a special priviledge of Church-
 Members, and much for the furtherance
 of their eternal Salvation, if they
 improve it aright, to the mortifying of
 those corruptions in them which could
 not be purged out and healed by easier
 means. And this is the proper end of it,
 that, seeing themselves, as *Adam*, driven
 from the Tree of Life, by the flaming
 Sword of a Cherubim; or, as *Cain*, cast
 out from Gods face; or, as the *Leper*, shut
 out from the fellowship of God's people;
 or, as that Incestuous *Corinthian*, delivered
 up to Satan, they may be ashamed, hum-
 bled, and effectually brought to Repen-
 tance, and to hold it forth according to
 God's Rules. If it work not this effect,
 the fault is their own: Yet it will not be
 without effect. For as the Gospel is the
 favour of Death unto Death, when it is
 not the favour of Life unto Life; so this
 Gospel-Ordinance shall not be in vain, but
 shall work, one way, or t'other, either
 the destruction of the impenitent, or
 the salvation of those that repent. That
 therefore it may be effectual for their e-
 ternal good, it is their duty, when the

sentence proceeds, either according to the eighteenth of *Matthew*, upon their not hearing the Church, in less hainous offences; or, according to 1 *Cor.* 5. and *Rev.* 22. 15. upon the hainous nature of scandals given by them against common light, *to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt them in due time*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. and to cry mightily to him, to add efficacy to his Ordinance, by his Spirit, that their spirits may be duly and truly humbled, their corruptions powerfully mortified, and their souls eternally saved. Be sure, that you take not part with your sin against the Ordinance, but take part with the Ordinance against your sin; and account it your honour, to honour God, and exalt his Rules; and let others learn hereby to fear, not joyning with the Church, but persisting obstinately in sin.

2. *Corollary.*

Then a Congregational Church (such as hath been described) is the highest Ecclesiastical Tribunal, under Christ, in its own matters. This was revealed to *John*, as that frame of Church-Government which should continue, from the Apostles time, unto the end of the World; when he saw a Throne set in Heaven, the Trinity sit-

(133)
sitting upon it, and the four living Creatures between it, and the four and twenty Elders who sat round about the Throne, *Rev. 4.1,* — 9. Thither appeals must be made according to Christ his Ordinance, by an offended Brother, after the first and second step; or by any Member that finds himself over-rigorously dealt with by his Brethren in these steps; *Matth. 18. 17, 18.* that there the Cause may be scanned, and Sentence proceed according to Christ. If the Church want sufficient light, or consent, for the sentence, they are to seek help from others by their Light and Counsel, but still preserving the power of Censure intirely in the Church, where Christ hath placed it. The wisdom of Christ, the good of the Church, and of every Member, and the nature of the thing require, that there be some chief Tribunal in the exercise of Church-Government, unto which Appeals must be last made; Juridically, and from which no Appeal may be granted and expected. 2. That this chief Tribunal must have no Ecclesiastical Power above it; and 3. That it may not be judicially censured by any Power of the same kind. All the question is, which is the chief Tribunal? That, say some, must be

the Classes, under which such Churches stand, and the Synods under which the Classes are subordinate; and they give this Reason: Because the end, for which the Keys are given to the Church, is, that all offences may be removed, *Mat. 18. 15, 16, &c.* Which, they say, cannot be done, if you put the chief Power of Judgment into a Congregational Church. For, what if an Elder? what if the whole Eldership? yea, what if the whole Church offend? The Church cannot censure their Elders; for that were to rule their Rulers, and to judge their Judges; nor will they censure themselves. But a Classis or Synod of many Elders may, and will, reform all, by judicially censuring all.

Answer 1. This Argument is built upon a mistake or error in the foundation of it. For the Rule prescribed in *Matth. 18.* is not for removal of all offences, but of such private and less hainous offences as grow publick and notorious, only by the obstinacy of the Delinquent. For, if offences be publick and heinous in themselves, the Apostle doth not direct Churches to proceed by those steps, *1 Cor. 5. 11. Rev. 22. 15.*

2. Nor doth it make the People Rulers of their Rulers, or Judges of their Judges, when

when we say, that the Church hath a power over them, in case of Delinquency. For Excommunication is not an act of the highest Rule, or Authority, but of the highest Judgment; and therefore the Power of it may well be in the whole Church, as their Priviledge, without any intrenchment upon the Rule and Authority of Elders; wherein, as Officers, they are above the Brethren, whilst they act according to Rule: But, if they become Delinquents, then as Members, they are under the Power of the whole. The Church must submit to them, as Rulers, whilst they rightly exercise the Authority of their Office, in Preaching, Administring the Seals, holding forth light from Scripture to guide them in censure, ordering Speech and Silence according to Rules of Order and Edification, and in other Official Acts: But they must submit to the Church, questioning, or proceeding to censure them with good advice of Neighbour-Churches and Elders; (who as they concurred in giving them the right hand of fellowship in their Ordination, so they should concur in approving this Censure, as justly inflicted by the Church, from parity of reason.) The Mayor in a free City, or Corporation, is, in the right Admini-

ministration of his Office, above the Court, none but he can perform the Acts peculiar to his place; yet, if he corrupt the People, pervert Justice, or be, any way, grossly and scandalously delinquent, the Court can censure and depose him. For the whole hath Power over any Member, to preserve its purity, and peace, and safety against any in the Body, that would corrupt, disturb or destroy the same. And the Covenant binds every Member, to be subject to the Power of the whole, either to be reformed, or removed from communion of it thereby.

3. Their Plaister is not suitable to heal the Sores of the Church, but it is either too broad, when offences of Brethren may be healed by Church-censure, within themselves, or, it is too narrow.

For, 1. Those Assemblies are too seldom, and cannot sit together long enough to remove the many offences that fall out frequently in Churches.

2. Nor can they Excommunicate a Church, nor any Officer or Member of a particular Church by warrant from Christ.

3. Classes, and Synods, and general Councils may be under just offences, as well as Churches; and who shall censure them?

4. This

4. This Plaister hinders the healing of the Sores of Churches. For, if a Delinquent, disliking the Churches proceeding, appeals from the sentence of the Church to the Classis, and, for the same reason, from the sentence of the Classis to a Provincial Synod, then, to a National Synod, then to an Oecumenical Council, which may not assemble in an Age; while the Appeal depends, he shall stand as uncensured. For this is the Law of Appeals. Now, how can that heal which is cross to the prescription of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only wise Physician? He saith, *Tell the Church; and if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen & Publican.* But he who appeals from the Church, doth not hear the Church. Therefore he that so doth, deserves to be cut off, by the sentence of Christ, which this Tradition of Appeals from Churches, *in re propria*, to Superiour Ecclesiastical Judicatories, contradicteth, and so, maketh the Commandment of Christ void, and of none effect. It remaineth therefore, that the Church of a particular Congregation is the highest Tribunal under Christ, in such things as are proper to it self.

Appellatio est jus, per quod prima sententia tantisper extinguitur, donec de causæ cognitione ad superiorem devoluta fuerit pronuntiandum.

3. *Corollary.*

Then intireness of Church-Government, in a particular Church compleated with its Officers, *in re propria*, will well consist with that communion of Churches which the Scripture establisheth. The reason is, because both are the Ordinances of Christ, and Christs Ordinances do not interfere. As the Communion of Neighbour-Families doth not cross the compleat Government of several Families within themselves, respectively, in things properly Domestical. And as communion among Kingdoms and Commonwealths, hindreth not the intireness of Jurisdiction in each Kingdom and Commonwealth within it self, in its proper concernments; So it is in the communion of Churches. Therefore Church-communion must be only, in a way of Brotherly association, for mutual helpfulness, in matters of this nature, but not in way of subordination, or subjection of one Church to the Ecclesiastical Government, whether of another Church, or of the Elders of several Churches assembled in Classes or Synods. The Communion of Churches, in the former way, is exercised according to Rule, in sundry cases, as

1. In

1. In mutual care. 2. In recommendation of Members. 3. In participation of such Ordinances as are for comfort and strengthening the Members of other Churches occasionally. 4. In relieving and succouring one another. 5. In countenancing, by giving the right hand of fellowship unto a Church in its first gathering, and unto Elders at their Ordination. 6. In consulting one with another, when we have occasion to require the Judgment and Counsel of other Churches, concerning any Person or Cause, where-with they may be better acquainted than our selves. 7. In admonishing one another, in case of publick scandal. All these (and if withdrawing fellowship upon just causes, be added to them) are no more than one Apostle may do to another, without exercising Church-Government over them. Communion of Churches in the latter way, of subordination or subjection to other Churches or Synods, *in re propria*; the Scripture no where approveth. Not of one Church to another, for there is a parity among Churches, *and par in parem non habet imperium*. Nor of one Church to a Synod made up of the Elders of sundry Neighbour-Churches. The Assembly in *Act. 15*. Is a pattern

See these particulars proved, in the Platform of Church-Discipline published by the Synod at Cambridge in New-England, Anno.

1649. the eighth moneth, Chap. 15. & 16.

they

they say of such a Synod. Let us see how their Classical Assemblies answer it.

1. That was no set meeting, monethly, or quarterly, but meerly occasional, *Act. 15. 1, 2.*

2. It was not an Assembly of Elders meeting apart from the Brethren of the Church where they assembled, *Vers. 22, 23.*

3. It was but a meeting of two Churches, that of *Antioch* sending their Messengers, with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and that at *Jerusalem*, the Apostles (whose residence, for the present, was there) joining with them, *Vers. 4, 6.*

4. That assembly gave their judgment, both of the Doctrine taught at *Antioch*, & of the persons that taught it, as troublesome and subverters, *Vers. 24.* but did neither Excommunicate them, nor command the Church to Excommunicate them.

5. They directed and charged the Church from the Word, what they should do, *Vers. 28, 29.* but they did not do their Acts of Power for them.

6. Nor did this Assembly exercise Church-government over that Church at *Antioch*, or any other Church or Churches, in admission of their Members, or in

in Ordination of their Officers, or in Administration of the Seals, or in Excommunicating, or in reversing or nullifying the censure inflicted by the Church. For these were *res propria* to every particular Church within it self. Yet, because I study peace, and consent with godly Brethren, so far as it may stand with Truth, I willingly grant, that other Churches, and Synods rightly gathered and ordered, have so much Power and Authority, even in these matters, as I can find any warrant for in Scripture; being willing also to yield further if it can be cleared from Scripture, that more is due unto them. There are two Cases, wherein the *res propria* of a particular Church, may fall under the cognizance and determination of other Churches or Synods.

I. When they want sufficient light, or competent consent among themselves, which was the case of the Church at *Antioch*; provided, that they have liberty to choose such a Church or Churches; for this purpose, as themselves approve to be fittest for attainment of their end, in seeking light, as the Church at *Antioch* agreed to send to that at *Jerusalem*, though two hundred miles distant from them. But, if they have sufficient light within themselves,

selves, and hold it forth convictingly
 from Scripture, the Elders and Princip-
 al Members of the Church, and major
 part of the Brethren by far consenting
 therein, no Rule requireth or alloweth,
 that, for the wilfulness of a Delinquent,
 who will not hear the Church, or of two
 or three Brethren, who side with him,
 and refuse to joyn with the Church in
 censuring him, the Church should be hin-
 dred from proceeding, till other Church-
 es or Elders have been consulted. For
 if this be granted, 1. It will disturb
 all Church-Proceedings. 2. And if it
 be brought to a Classis, it must issue there
 by the Vote of the major part, if as many
 Elders in that Assembly dissent, as Bre-
 thren did before in the Church-meeting,
 so that nothing is gained thereby. And
 if the Delinquent, for the same reason,
 appeal to a Synod, there may be the same
 issue, and so appeals may be drawn fur-
 ther, till a Delinquent wrest himself at
 last from all power of censure. The se-
 cond Case is, when that which is *res pro-*
pria, in the thing done, simply considered,
 becomes *res communis* in the Cause or
 ground of proceeding. For though re-
 ceiving of Members, Election, and Ordina-
 tion of Officers, and Administration of
 Seals

Seals and Censures, be Acts of the power given by Christ to particular Churches; yet it never was the mind of Christ, to establish, by that Grant, an absolute power in such Churches, to corrupt the Faith and Worship of God, in themselves, and in other Churches. If therefore a Church, that was planted a noble *Vine*, wholly a *right Seed*, shall turn into the degenerate *Plants of a strange Vine* unto God; and become Heretical, or Schismatical, or scandalously corrupt, and therefore receive into their fellowship known Hereticks, and Schismatics, and choose such into Office, and refuse to admit into fellowship or Office, such as are sound in the Faith, because they are sound in the Faith and Order of the Gospel, and cast out from their fellowship such as testify, according to Rule, against these evils, and refuse to consent with them therein; &c. the Neighbour Church, or Churches, or Elders, and Brethren Assembled in a Synod (if the evil spread to the disturbing, corrupting, or scandalizing of many Churches) have power, and it is their duty, 1. To consider of this Matter, *Act. 15. 6.* 2. To argue, debate, and determine according to the Word, *Vers. 7. — 23.* 3. To publish the same to

the Church or Churches whom it concerneth, *vers.* 13. to bear witness against their corruptions in Doctrine or Manners, and to give directions from the Word, for the Reformation thereof, *vers.* 24, 28, 29. 4. Such Determinations, and Directions being found consonant to the Word of God in Scripture, the Church to whom they are sent, are to receive them with due reverence and submission, as to the Ordinance of God. Or, 5. In case of obstinate persistence of such a Church or Churches in their scandalous evils against light convictingly held forth, the Churches so offended, or scandalized by them, are to withdraw from them the right hand of fellowship and Church-Communion, till they repent and reform. This follows, in proportion, from the contrary, *Gal.* 2. 9. and *à pari*, 2 *Thess.* 3. 6, 14. there being a like reason of Churches and Persons, in this respect. Yet such offended Churches and Synods, are not to exercise Church-censures, in way of Discipline, nor any other Act of Church-Government, as neither did that Assembly, in *Ad.* 15. 29.

Here I shall crave leave to joyn with my Brethren in adding some caution touching the Communion and Consociation

'tion of Churches, ' To see that this Con-
 'fociation of Churches be not perverted,
 'either to the oppreffion, or diminution
 'of the juft Liberty and Authority of
 'each particular Church within it felf,
 'who being well fupplied with a faith-
 'ful and expert *Presbytery* of their own,
 'do walk in their integrity, according
 'to the Truth and Peace of the Gospel.
 'Let Synods have their juft Authority in
 'all Churches, how pure foever, in de-
 'termining fuch διατάξεις, as are requi-
 'fite for the edification of all Churches,
 'acording to God: but in the Election
 'and Ordination of Officers, and censure
 'of offenders, let it fuffice the Churches
 'Confociate to affift one another with
 'their Counfel, and right hand of fel-
 'lowfhip, when they fee a particular
 'Church to ufe their Liberty and Power
 'aright. But let them not put forth the
 'Power of their Community, either to
 'take fuch Church Acts out of their
 'hands, or to hinder them in their law-
 'ful courfe, unlefs they fee them through
 'ignorance or weaknefs, to abufe their
 'Liberty and Authority in the Gospel.
 'All the Liberties of the Churches were
 'purchafed to them by the precious Blood
 'of the Lord Jefus, and therefore may

Mr. Cotton
 of the
 Keys, p. 171

not the Churches give them away, nor
many Churches take them out of the
hands of one.

Mr. Shep-
heard's &
Mr. Allen's
Defense of
the 9 Posi-
tions, in
answ. to
Mr. Ball.

Others express their apprehensions, in
a way of Caution, touching this mat-
ter, thus.

Association of divers particular Churches, we hold needful, as well as the
combination of Members into one
Church; yet so, as there be no Schism
of one from another, nor usurpation of
one over another; that either one
should deprive the rest of peace, by
Schism, or many should deprive any
one of its power by usurpation. Hence
a Fraternal Consociation we acknow-
ledge: *Consociation*; for mutual Coun-
sel and help, to prevent, or remove,
Sin, or Schism: Yet *Fraternal only*, to
to preserve each others Power. Conso-
ciation of Churches we would have *cu-
mulative* (not in words, but in deed)
to strengthen the power of particular
Churches: Not *privative*, to take away
any power, which they had from the
gift of Christ before. For, as on the
one side, it may seem strange, that one
Church offending should have no means
of Cure by the *conceived power* of many;
so, on the other side, the danger may
appear

‘appear as great, and frequently falls out,
 ‘that, when many Churches are scanda-
 ‘lous, one innocent Church may be hurt
 ‘by the Usurpation of all. And hence
 ‘we see not, but that Fraternal Confocia-
 ‘tion is the best Medicine to heal the
 ‘Wounds of both.

Hereunto I shall add, that, as these god-
 ly Learned Brethren speak nothing for
 the Clasical Power of Elders, for which
 the *Presbyterians* contend, *tantum pro*
aris & focis; so in that Communion of
 Churches, which I with them look at as
 the Ordinance of Christ, due moderati-
 on must be exercised by Neighbour Churches,
 that their exercising brotherly Com-
 munion in testifying against such Acts
 in a particular Church, as they conceive
 to be aberrations from the Rule, be ac-
 cording to Scripture-Light, with Hu-
 mility; and that,

1. Held forth by them, they looking
 at themselves, though as Elders, yet not
 as Apostles, nor as infallibly assisted, or
 carried by the Spirit, above all possibility
 of erring, in their Determinations and
 Counsels, and therefore do not in a Ma-
 sterly way impose their Determinations
 and Counsels upon others, but propound
 them in the fear of God, to be examined

by the Scripture, and received only so far, as they shall be found to agree therewith. And, if that Church hold forth Reasons of their contrary apprehensions, let them be duly weighed, and answered convictingly; or let that Church be left at liberty, to walk according to their own light, *in re propria*, without offense, or disturbance.

2. Godly Wisdom is to be exercised in such proceedings, in making difference between Cause and Cause; which will not suffer Churches to connive at grosser scandals, nor to withdraw the right-hand of fellowship from any Church upon small differences in Judgement or Practice, much less, for Censuring, and holding under Censure impenitent persons, when the scandalous obstinacy of delinquents is *res propria* to that Church, though some other Churches (being misled by their Guides, who possibly may side, more than they ought, with the delinquent, out of some secret grutch against the Elders of that Church) declare it to be their Judgment, that the party should not have been layed under that Censure, or should now be released from it. To withdraw the right-hand of fellowship from a Church for such a cause,

is contrary to Rules of true Wisdom. If a Church be found in the Faith and Order of the Gospel, greater matters than this will cause no breach of Communion between Churches, where brotherly Communion is exercised with true Humility and godly Wisdom. See the moderation of that *Affrican* Synod, whereof *Cyprian* wrote thus to *Stephanus*, *Ceterum scimus quosdam, quod semel imbibierint, nolle deponere, nec propositum suum facile mutare, sed salvo inter collegas pacis & concordie vinculo, quedam propria, quæ apud se semel sint usurpata, retinere.* *Quâ in re, nec nos cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, cum habeat in Ecclesie administratione voluntatis sue arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.* Yet these proper practices of some Churches, differed from the Decree of that Synod, which was established, as he saith, *Consensu & autoritate communi.* Nor will there ever be end of breaches among Churches, unless due moderation, in such Cases, be exercised, that love among Churches may be maintained.

3. Unto these let it be added, that as the Foundation of the Communion of Churches is *brotherly love*, so all the

Churches should shew to any one Church, and before other Churches, the proof of their love, in not easily receiving suggestions against the proceedings of it, though from some Elder or Pastor, or Teacher of another Church, who may possibly speak against them out of envy, or ill will; much more, in not countenancing a censured Delinquent, complaining against the Church and Elders, by whom he was censured, in a disorderly tumultuous manner, as desirous to beget reproach and trouble to that Church, and Contentions and Divisions among the Churches and Elders, from an evil spirit of revenge. The *Afffrican* Pastors were careful hereof, as *Cyprian* notes. *Cum statum sit omnibus nobis, & æquum sit pariter ac justum, ut uniuscujusq; causa illic audiat, ubi est crimen admissum, & singulis pastoribus portio egregis sit ascripta; quam regat unusquisq; & gubernet, rationem sui actus Domino redditurus, oportet utiq; eos quibus præsumus, non circumcardare; nec Episcoporum concordiam coherentem suâ subdola & fallaci temeritate, collidere, sed agere illic causam suam, ubi, & accusatores habere, & testes sui criminis, possint.*

Lastly, If the Elders and Messengers of Churches assembled in a Synod, shall de-

Cyprian.
lib. 1. Ep.
3.

determine any thing contrary to the Rule, and prejudicial to the intireness of the Churches Power, within it self, the Church may, and ought, to refuse such Sanctions, as not being sancited by the Lord. The Communion of Churches being rightly ordered, according to what hath been said, is a sufficient Spiritual Remedy against all those inconveniences, which some think cannot be redressed, unless Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over particular Churches be established in Classes and Synods: As, if a Church fall into two Factions & Oppositions within it self, or, if there be scandalous contention between two Churches, or between the Eldership and Brother-hood of the same Church; or, if a whole Church be under scandalous Delinquencies: I say, these and the like inconveniencies will be better redressed, in this way, than in that of Classial Government. For, this way is grounded upon Divine Institution, so is not that: And the blessing of Christ follows and accompanies his own Institutions, not mens devices. If *Uzzab* put forth his hand to stay the Ark, his good intention could not justifie his action, but his not acting according to Gods order was his death. The Prelates had as plausible

gible a plea for their Jurisdiction over Churches, and taking the Keyes out of their hands, viz. for Unity, Peace, and Conformity; yet the vanity of it is now manifested unto all men. Lastly, The same inconveniences may befall Classi- cal and Synodal Assemblies, yea, and Oecu- menical Councils, and what remedy is there for them? Not so much, as this way of Communion of Churches afford- eth to particular Churches.

Corollary 4.

Then intireness of Church-Govern- ment in a particular Congregation, *in re propria*, ought to be thankfully received, rightly improved, and faithfully preser- ved, without violation of it, both by the Members of particular Churches, and by other Churches, and their Officers.

1. It must be thankfully received, as a blessing promised of God unto his people, *whose hearts are engaged to approach unto him*, Jer. 30. 21. The grant by Charter, of intireness of Government within them- selves, unto Cities and Corporations, hath ever been highly esteemed, as an Act of special grace from the Sovereign Pow- er. It was for the injoyment of this Pri- viledge, with the consequents of it, that the *chief Captain*, in *Acts* 22. 25, 26,

26, 28. purchased his freedom in Rome with a great summe of money. This grant to particular Churches is advantagious to the Members of them, sundry wayes.

1. For their ease, in having their Causes heard, examined and issued, at home, without chargeable, tiresome journeys to the Classica! or Synodal Assembly, to have their matters determined there.
2. For encouragement and liberty of the spirit and speech of him that is to answer before his Brethren and the Elders, who have a Member-like and Pastoral care and respect of him, whereas the presence of sundry strange faces of persons of superior Rank and Quality, would not a little daunt him, which might occasion his falling in his Cause.
3. For their satisfaction concerning the Churches proceeding, where, as all circumstances can be best cleared, so more moderation may rationally be expected from their own Officers and Brethren, than from strangers, comparatively, and from such as are subject to the same censures, and the same either hath been, or may be, their own case, they know not how soon, (which are strong inducements to moderation, *Exod. 23. 9. Gal. 6. 1.*) than from a Judiciary of constant Judges, who think them.

themselves out of that danger. 4. For common edification in the Congregational way, all may hear and be edified by their presence in Church-proceedings, *Acts* 5. 11. This they loose, in the *Presbyterial* way, Classicall Assemblies consisting only of Elders meeting and acting apart.

2. It must be rightly improved, which is then done, when Church-proceedings are orderly carried according to Christs Rules, both by the Eldership and Fraternity, acting the Power which Christ hath delegated to them; respectively, according to their severall interests, in the due order, and with mutual consent, according to God.

3. It must be faithfully preserved without violation. 1. By the Members of particular Churches, submitting to the Ordinance of Christ, whereby the Church, acting according to Rule, is made under Christ, the highest Ecclesiastical Tribunal, in its own matters, *2 Cor.* 8. 5. without appealing to other Ecclesiastical Judiciatories, who have no power from Christ to dispense Church-censures, or to release men from them, *Matth.* 18. 18.

Object. What if the Brother be not satisfied in the equity of the Churches proceed-

ceeding? *Ans.* The Elders having declared the mind of Christ from Scripture to guide their proceedings, and the Brethren either ὁμοθυμαδόν, or the major part, by far, judging accordingly, let him suspect his own apprehensions, fearing that Satans temptations, and his own corruptions, Pride, and self-flattery may darken and harden him, *Prov.* 28. 14. 2. Let him attend seriously to the light held forth from Scripture, for his conviction, *2 Cor.* 2. 6. praying the Lord to make it effectual in him. 3. Let him thankfully close with the light that doth shine unto him, and answerably judge and condemn in himself the evil, which that light reproveth, and follow on to know the whole mind of Christ concerning the nature and compass of his guilt, seeking unto the Elders for further help, with a self-denying spirit, that he may come up fully to the Rule. 4. If he cannot shew convictingly to the Church some errours in the Elders expounding or applying the Rule to the Case, whereupon the Censure proceeded, let him fall under the Rule, or look at it as his great sin, and violation of his Covenant, which bound him to submit unto the judgement of the Church, if he finde that, through
 sinful

sinful prejudice, he cannot receive the light held forth, when he hath no objection of weight against it.

2. Other Churches and the Elders of them ought to preserve the intireness of Power of every particular Church, *in re propria*, inviolate. The Law of Love and Righteousness binds every man hereunto. One Corporation must uphold the just Rights, Liberties, and Power of another. *If a man see his brothers Ox or Sheep go astray, he must in any case bring them again unto his brother, Deut. 22. 1.* much more if he see a Sheep of Christ go astray by sinful prejudice against the Church, he must in any case convince him of his errour, and bring him again to the Church, as the Angel returned *Hagar to Sarah* her Mistress, *Gen. 16. 8, 9.* For this purpose, 1. They must *not receive an accusation against an Elder* (much less, against the Church and Eldership) *under two or three witnesses, 1 Tim. 5. 19.* therefore much less, from a Delinquent under publick censure, and that in his one cause. 2. If more joyn with him, attesting what he saith; they must see, 1 Whether they do it, in a way of faction, siding with a censured Delinquent against the Church, or no. If yea; they must

must testify against their way, as contrary to Rule, and avoid them, as disturbers of the peace of the Church, *Rom. 16. 17.* If not; they must inquire, 1, whether they have pleaded with the Church itself, *Hos. 2. 2.* in such manner as becometh such as would approve themselves to love the Truth and Peace, *Zach. 8. 21.* before they become accusers of the Brethren unto others. 2 Whether they proceed peaceably, or tumultuously? and tumultuously they do act, if they seek not Light in the use of Means, first, at home, but refuse help that way, when it is offered them, that they may make trouble and disturbance to the Church, by spreading their complaints abroad, and those, not to some one Church, without whose help the question cannot be ended, as the Church at *Antioch* sent to the Church at *Jerusalem*, but to eight or nine Churches, some nearer, some far distant from the Church, some 40, 50, 100, 150 miles off, and that without giving notice of their purpose to the Church, or having their consent thereunto, or so much as to the stating of the question. If so, they may clearly see an evil spirit working in the business, with which, others should have no fellowship, *2 Cor. 12. 20.* 3 Whether

ther they do positively justifie the Delinquent in that, for which he was censured, and upon what grounds; or only declare their good Opinion of the Delinquent in some respects, and that they are not clear concerning the equity of the censure. If the latter, It is the duty of those to whom they thus speak, to convince them of the error of their way. 4 Whether they come only in a back-biting way, or are willing to speak the same things publicly before the Church, which they accuse privately. If not, they must be convinced of their sinning against common equity, *Ad. 25. 16.* 5 What the end is which they propound unto themselves in taking this course? whether it be for light only? or, for the nullifying of the censure by the power of others? If the former; they cannot safely conclude any thing, *alterâ parte inauditâ*, remembering what *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 18. 17.* If the latter, they must profess, that they have no such Power, but all that they can do, is, to inform themselves from the Church, whether their report be true, or not, and to give such advise from Scripture, as the case requires, according to their judgement, exhorting them in the mean space, to attend

tend the Rule in Memberlike submission to the Power of their Church, according to God.

Quest. But suppose that the party censured think he can prove that he is wronged; is there no course to be taken for the freeing of him from a sentence that is unjust in his apprehension?

Ans. If he hath held forth convincing light (as he conceiveth) to the Church, to prove that he is wronged, and hath waited patiently for redress, but can find none, and therefore desireth to joyn with some other Church; he may remove his dwelling, if no other Church be in the same place, or, without that, if there be, and he may offer himself to their fellowship, making known to them his case. If, in other respects, they approve him, as one, whose fellowship with them would be helpful, or comfortable to them; they will acquaint the Church, whence he came, with his desire, and crave their advice, which will draw from that Church a full Narrative of his Case: Upon examination whereof these, who desire his fellowship, will labour with him, to further his repentance, and his holding it forth to the

* M satisf

satisfaction of that offended Church, according to Rule; which being done, the Church that was offended will be reconciled to him, and forgive him, and confirm their love to him, in the Lord, and recommend him to that fellowship where he desires to settle. But, if they will not; the Church that hath thus far laboured in the business, will acquaint other neighbour-Churches with the matter, and crave their advice, who finding, either that the Church did err in judgement, or that the Delinquent hath satisfied the Rule of Repentance, will signify their apprehensions to both the Churches, and accordingly the party is, either released by the one, or received by the other, each of them preserving its Church-power in *re propria*, according to their light, maintaining still Church-Communion, notwithstanding their different apprehensions touching this matter.

2. If the case be reducible to what is noted in the third *Corollary*, there you may find a sufficient Remedy prescribed, according to Congregational Principles, without his remove.

3. In some Cases, a mischief is to be cho-

chosen, before an inconvenience, as Lawyers speak. Better it is that the Church want a Remedy for a Case that may not happen in a mans life, than to be under the continual droppings of Classcal Jurisdiction over them in all Cases.

4. We have formerly proved, that Classcal Jurisdiction is so far from being helpful to Churches, that it frustrates Christs grant of Power to particular Churches in *re propria*.

• F I N I S .
